THE

Unexpected Wedding.

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IN A

SERIES of LETTERS.

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THE

Unexpected Wedding.

LETTER I.

OLIVIA to Sir MICHAEL LESLEY.

London.

ALAS! poor, domeſticated Harriot! who could imagine the twin ſiſter of Olivia Rutland would have made ſo *very* a wife?

I find myſelf in a moſt diſtreſs'd ſituation, reduced to the neceſſity of having no confidante at all, or elſe of chuſing one from the other ſex. My determination is in your favour, Sir Michael; from this moment my whole confidence de-

volves on you. What ſignifies writing to Harriot? when before ſhe has ſcarce read two lines, comes Tommy, ſmiling in her pleaſed matronly face, *Mamma, pray explain this*; or Billy, with all the gravity of his pappa, *Mamma, pray look at Billy's bad finger*;—down goes my diſregarded epiſtle! her arms, which for whiteneſs can only be exceeded by my own, are thrown round them, one hangs about her knees, the other her neck, till ſhe quite forgets my letter; nay, perhaps, it is ſacrilegiouſly trodden under foot. What woman can tamely ſuffer ſuch indignities? My lovers too! how would they ſtrut and ſtorm, to hear their portraits had been thus treated? I am reſolved—but take care, Sir Michael, when you are honoured with this, or any future mark of my favour; take care, I

ſay, and keep the little roſy fellows at a diſtance.

Poſitively I can hear no more of Sir Harry Oſwall; his extravagantly tender billet-doux, and your extravagantly teazing interpoſitions, are to very little purpoſe. Suppoſe he has ſpent a few paltry thouſands in following me, did I command his attendance laſt winter at Edinburgh? Did I drag him after me to plays, aſſemblies, concerts, and thoſe ridiculous expenſive places, even by a look? No, Brother! I could tear my eyes out, were I the leaſt conſcious they had been aiding to the folly of your friend. Beſides, good Sir, to let you into a ſecret, he has mortally offended me—aſk not the particulars—if I have clemency enough to conceal, I think he will not have audacity enough to diſcover them. His grandmother's death diſmiſſes him

from his attendance at North-hill; ſhould that happen, tell him not that I am flown to England; ſay rather France, Ireland, or Nova-Scotia; if he ſeems inclined to follow me, I ſhould prefer the latter, for reaſons which cannot but appear obvious. London is quite a heaven, and we all live like angels; none of your grave admonitions, Brother.

I am, &c. &c.

LETTER II.

Lady LESLEY to OLIVIA.

INCORRIGIBLE girl! why diſclaim me for a correſpondent? You will be ſerved in your own coin—even now againſt your commands I am forced upon you. Lord help us! you have put Sir Michael almoſt beſide himſelf with paſſion; he ſtorms, he raves, he calls you—not for the univerſe would I ſay what he calls you—Tommy, all amazement, with his ſweet inquiſitive eye, endeavours to trace the cauſe of his father's diſpleaſure on his agitated countenance; then running to me, and laying his head in my boſom, "Mamma, Mamma, he ſays,

" ſee how Pappa frowns--he muſt be angry
" with me or my brother Billy." " No,
" my love, with your Aunt Olivia he is an-
" gry—ſhe is a naughty girl; ſhe will not
" do as your Pappa would have her." The eyes of my prattlers ran over—they would go and beg their pappa to forgive their poor aunt—they were ſure ſhe would be very good for the future. " You know,
" Mamma, ſaid Billy, we ought to love
" our aunt—ſhe uſed to love us—ſhe uſed
" to call us her two little cherub boys." Away tripp'd your mediators, and whilſt Sir Michael held them on his knee, the ſeverity of his countenance gave place to a ſmile of ſoul-felt ſatisfaction. Are you inſenſible to the value of that heart you have diſtreſs'd? Are you inſenſible to my huſband's ſteadineſs, where he has once profeſſed a friendſhip? If not, why did you mention, I mean, ſo whimſically

mention,

mention, the friend of his boſom? We had both reaſon till now to ſuppoſe you *more* than indifferent to Sir Harry Oſwall. He has mortally offended you! If he is ſo greatly to blame as you repreſent him, why not declare his offence? why ſuffer your brother, your ſiſter, to give their eſteem to a man whom you ſuſpect to be unworthy? Indeed, Olivia, I am apt to think, was this mighty charge brought to a fair trial, not the *accuſed*, but the *accuſer*, would appear to merit puniſhment.

You deſire we will no more mention to you Sir Harry Oſwall—your ſtrange humour ſhall be complied with—in return, we expect a minute deſcription of every particular link in the great chain of your preſent admirers. I am not *yet* ſo infatuated a mother, or ſo *very* a wife, as to be inſenſible to the happy vivacity of my

ſiſter, when ſhe confines her pen within certain limits—we muſt not *again* have the worthieſt man on earth ludicrouſly treated, and for what reaſon? why, for no other, than that he is unfortunate enough to love you.

Notwithſtanding all I have ſaid of Sir Michael's diſpleaſure, he is determined to accept the offer you make him of your confidence; this you would have learned from himſelf, but his cloſe attendance on a ſick friend is at this time indiſpenſible. I will not intrude more of ſo gloomy a ſubject on your chearful hours---write with your uſual vivacity---write if you pleaſe to Sir Michael—he is your confidant—I am his—and give you warning that I ſhall open every billet-doux or epiſtle that comes in his abſence.

LETTER III.

OLIVIA to Lady LESLEY.

POSITIVELY, my dear ſiſter, you alarm me greatly—is it poſſible that Sir Michael can be *really* angry? I love him too tenderly even in jeſt to offend; I will no more trifle with a ſubject that diſpleaſes him. A thouſand kiſſes to my angelic charmers; tell them every tear given their aunt in her diſgrace with their pappa, ſhall, when ſhe ſees them, be abundantly repaid with cakes and ſugar plums. Sweet dears! how I long to fold them in my arms.

Before I proceed, let me examine my watch---another hour good. Lady Wriggleſide has a dinner-party; her ladyſhip never

never dines till ſix. Upon my word, her routes are immenſely brilliant; the whole world I am told are to be there this evening.

Lady Stenton talks of ſoon throwing aſide her weeds. Between you and I, my dear, we girls have no chance with thoſe high-jointured widows. Her ladyſhip is quite a new thing---to be plain, Harriot, ſhe is now by no means my favourite---that affability, that diffidence, that officiouſneſs to oblige, which once endeared her to us, ſeems buried in the vault of her huſband---ſhe treats even *me* with haughtineſs, is opinionated to the laſt degree, and officious only in miſchief.

I have, in the words of old Vellum, a twofold reaſon for not ſhortening my viſit; firſt that I muſt forfeit the agreeable company of Lady Bell Haſtings, who, by the bye, has no great reaſon to vene-

rate

rate her dowager mother-in-law; and next becauſe, forgive my vanity, a tall, genteel perſon, commanding air, ſprightly eyes, dark hair, blooming complexion, and animated features, muſt afford a contraſt exceedingly to the advantage of ſomebody; for which reaſon I always perk myſelf up cloſe by the ſide of her languiſhing ladyſhip. O! how ſhe ſwells, how ſhe colours, how ſhe bridles! Title and fortune procure her a few civil things even in my preſence; but then the *tongue* ſays one thing, and the *eyes* another. Poor Lady Bell! had you been as handſome as ſomebody, your trials would be intolerable.

So! it ſeems you are determined, and my brother too is determined, never more to mention Sir Harry to their *ungracious* ſiſter! You infinitely oblige me, there is no price at which I will not purchaſe ſo great

great an indulgence. Methinks Sir Michael and you, Harriot, might have done me more juſtice than to ſuppoſe I had ever a tender for the man---or if I had---to be treated as I have been treated, would have wakened infatuation itſelf to reſentment. He is never more to be mentioned to me---thank you, thank you both; from this moment be his name forgotten. Excuſe the liſt of my lovers till I have reconnoitred them at Lady Wriggleſide's, where I expect they will all muſter this evening.

To-morrow Lady Bell and I prance to Hyde-Park!---two of the prettieſt nags you ever ſaw!---attended nobly!---the moſt inchanting riding dreſs!---you know I make a tolerable figure on horſeback. Adieu, adieu.

LETTER

LETTER IV.

Sir MICHAEL LESLEY to OLIVIA.

FORGIVE me, my dear ſiſter, for having dared, even in thought, to accuſe you---I am now all penitence for my error---you have taken the bandage from my eyes---your injuries muſt have been glaring, or you could not entirely diſavow that partiality which once appeared in favour of Sir Harry Oſwall. When I imagined your change of behaviour proceeded from fickleneſs, I almoſt forgot the *brother* in the *friend*---I looked on that woman who could play with a heart ſo valuable, unworthy, totally unworthy its poſſeſſion. The fineneſs of his perſon, the elegance of his manners, the

ſeeming nobleneſs of his actions, the peculiar delicacy of his ſentiments, are attractions no thinking woman would calmly renounce, unleſs ſhe had diſcovered ſome eſſential fault, which her honour or her future happineſs made it unſafe for her to pardon. You have renounced him! ---I gueſs from what motive you conceal the particulars of his offence---I aſk not for them---I know enough---you are offended---no man on earth ſhall offend the ſiſter of my Harriot with impunity! It ſo happens, that I am under a neceſſity of delaying for the preſent his chaſtiſement---at this time he ſuffers from another hand.

I accept, with pleaſure, the offer you make me of your confidence---you ſhall find I will not abuſe it---your happineſs is dear to me---I will continually have it in purſuit---believe me faithful---treat me without reſerve.

The

The world, Olivia, before the moſt amiable woman in it fixed me her own, never produced a greater rover, a more general admirer; conſequently no man can experimentally ſpeak better than myſelf on the power of your ſex.

I have loved facetious, melancholy, proud, and fantaſtical miſtreſſes---I have loved the fair, the black, the brown, the little, and the great in turn. My firſt attachment was to a flighty, inconſiderate unthinking, giddy girl, without vice, and whoſe virtues were merely negative. The ſecond time I ever ſaw her, ſhe obliged me with a thouſand civilities, laughed, ſung, danced, and played with me as freely as if we had been of twenty years acquaintance: I viſited her often; ſhe gave me the greateſt encouragement, but ſtarted at a ſerious declaration of love,

and

and pretended to have been quite ignorant of my intentions.

My next deity was of a melancholy humour; imagine not that I mean gloomy, frowning, or fretful, but a pleaſing kind of melancholy, which in itſelf is no enemy to pleaſure. My paſſion laſted a whole year, and if the lady's father had not interfered with all his authority in favour of an antiquated earl, might have continued much longer---but ſhe was compelled to forget me, and I paid oblivion with oblivion.

Chance next threw in my way a proud, fantaſtical beauty, one who never obliged me in the leaſt trifle, but ſhe inſtantly repented of her condeſcenſion: ſhe had wit, ſenſibility, nor wanted tenderneſs. Our quarrels were frequent, but ſoon reconciled, till unfortunately I happened to praiſe a young lady who was a rival-

toaſt,

toaſt, forbad her preſence with the moſt peremptory haughtineſs. I ſubmitted, nor ever again ſought to be reinſtated in her good graces.

Heaven ſaw with how much patience I bore thoſe ſevere diſappointments, and rewarded me with the faireſt work of nature. My Harriot poſſeſſes enough of vivacity to render her converſation entertaining; has enough of ſweet languor in her looks to ſpeak a mind great, generous, ſuſceptible; wit enough to captivate its fondeſt votary; and wiſdom enough not to proſtitute that wit to improper purpoſes. I am the moſt fortunate of men---I have gathered a roſe without thorns---I know but one woman who can diſpenſe happineſs like my Harriot---even that one is not yet her equal---there wants the wife's ſedateneſs, the mother's melting tenderneſs to complete

her character: Yes, Olivia, it is in your power, with that rectitude of ſoul, that innocence of manners for which your friends adore you, to engage the eternal gratitude of ſome worthy man. That man, you ſay, cannot be Sir Harry Oſwall. No, my ſiſter! never, I charge you, think of Sir Harry---my hand is impatient to chaſtiſe him---his very name fires me to vengeance.

What you ſay of Lady Stenton fills me with ſurprize; is it poſſible ſhe can throw off that reſpect ſhe owes the daughter of her benefactor? Has ſhe forgot the poverty from which your good father ſnatch'd her when an infant? Does ſhe no longer remember that benevolence which made her dependent ſtate not only eaſy, but imperceptible? Aſtoniſhing ingratitude! Stay no longer, I entreat you, under her deteſted roof! You ſay too, ſhe

is

is inclined to miſchief---ſhe muſt be dangerous; leave her, I conjure you! Excuſe me, if I ſay your reaſons for not moving are far from ſolid---my aunt and couſins will rejoice to accommodate you ---it is in hopes of having you for their viſitor, that they are abſolutely bent on returning to England next week. It will be no difficult matter to part on genteel terms with Lady Stenton; and for Lady Bell, whoſe ſituation I heartily commiſerate, you may ſee her ladyſhip as often as you pleaſe in Mrs. Keith's family.

If you reject this propoſal, and inclination leads you to Eadon Heath, we ſhall receive you with open arms---thoſe gay ſcenes you leave behind, we will replace by others, which ſhall at leaſt boaſt the charm of novelty. Yeſterday we were invited by a meſſenger in a gaudy livery to a concert, ſuch as might have raviſhed

even the ear of harmony---our meſſenger a goldfinch, the principal performers nightingales and thruſhes. In deſcribing entertainments like this, it is natural not to omit the dreſs and appearance of ſome dazzling beauty, who ingroſſes our attention; but how ſhall I deſcribe the elegance of my Harriot's dreſs, the ecſtatic pleaſure of her countenance? A muſlin negligee, which her own fingers had enriched in a variety of patterns, and unſullied as her thoughts; a white ſilk ſcarf, and chip hat lined with the paleſt pink, inimitably matched to the delicacy of her complexion---the wife, the mother, the friend, the chriſtian, all beaming from her mild eyes---in either hand a pledge of conjugal affection---never did your lovely ſiſter appear ſo irreſiſtibly charming---my gratitude to heaven and her is infinite---ſhe is the daughter of

per-

perfection---every day brings an addition to my felicity. Give me a brother, dear Olivia, whoſe gratitude and happineſs ſhall keep ſome pace with mine.

LETTER V.

OLIVIA to Lady LESLEY.

MY God! what would Sir Michael do?---What does he threaten?---Fly to him; ſay Sir Harry Oſwall is not to blame---ſay it was the fooliſh caprice of my own humour---ſay I am---ſay any thing. Raſh Brother! Harriot, he intends to fight Sir Harry---prevent him, my dear ſiſter, or what becomes of your

OLIVIA?

LETTER VI.

Lady Lesley to Olivia.

I AM equally alarmed with my Olivia---I plead in vain---he is convinced you would not deſpiſe and hate Sir Harry Oſwall for a ſlight offence. "Can "Miſs Rutland, ſaid he, can the moſt "ingenuous girl breathing, conceal his "offence, eſpecially when her own con-"duct is by that concealment ſuſpected "of inconſtancy? No! ſhe would cer-"tainly clear herſelf, were not the "thoughts of a diſcovery repugnant to "her delicacy. Intreat me no longer--- "from this hand Sir Harry muſt, by "heaven he ſhall, receive the fate he me-"rits." His arguments, I confeſs, are

juſt; yet is there no poſſibility of moving him? Yes, I believe it is ſtill in your power to avert the threatened danger---you have no intereſt in the ſafety of Sir Harry Oſwall--but the preſervation of my huſband cannot be a matter of indifference---write me therefore the particulars of the injury you have received. If Sir Harry has not been ſo *very* criminal as we ſuppoſe, if his offence will admit the leaſt alleviation, I will repreſent it in the moſt favourable colours to Sir Michael---perhaps my entreaties, joined to finding his once lov'd friend leſs guilty than imagination has formed him, may blunt the edge of his reſentment. Conſider of this, my dear ſiſter, and if you approve my ſcheme, delay not to put it into execution. I ſhall expect your anſwer with impatience.

LETTER

LETTER VII.

YES, Harriot! in conſideration of my brother's ſafety, I will confeſs that I have ſomewhat exaggerated the offence of which I complained. Sir Harry might not be *quite* ſo much to blame as I repreſented him---hear and judge between us, after which you have my permiſſion to lay as much of the affair as you think proper before Sir Michael. On cooler conſideration, I think he would not have been ſo very ſudden in his vengeance. No! no! the ſun would certainly have gone down upon his wrath---he knows I have a ſecret---I fooliſhly told him that I had, and he takes this method to wreſt it from me. You would hardly have wrote ſo coolly, had there been any danger

ger of his fighting. Well, well! I will not diſappoint him---I haſten to ſatisfy his curioſity.

You may remember, a few weeks preceding my departure from Scotland, we were invited to a ball at Lord F——'s; ſomething happened to prevent your going---Sir Harry eſcorted me, and ſolicited my hand for the evening. I pretended a pre-engagement---he preſſed to know to whom I was engaged—he appeared chagrined---I laughed at his anxiety, and refuſed to tell him. Something whiſpers, perhaps the voice of my own conſcience, that you will condemn me; to confeſs the truth, I really think my ſcheme ridiculous enough. You know at that time the world talked of an attachment—Sir Harry was really commenced my lover, and I hoped, by avoiding all particularities, ſuch reports would be ſoon

ſilenced. I accepted the firſt partner that offered; he was a ſtranger, extremely officious, and I obſerved Sir Harry's diſorder viſibly increaſe. I aſked him if he did not dance? No! with a ſigh. Nor play? Neither, Miſs Rutland; I am alike unfit for both. Mighty ſerious, thought I; you ſhall not ſhew theſe airs with impunity. I flung from him with ſeeming gaiety of heart—I mixed in the dance—I liſtened to the devoirs of my obſequious partner with affected tranſport. Sir Harry's chearfulneſs returned—he took out Lord Richmear's ſiſter, a tall, aukward thing, a round face, high cheeks, and ſmall eyes, immenſely ſilly, and inſufferably affected. I was not diſpleaſed with his choice, nor did I ever ſee him appear to more advantage; he danced with infinite ſpirit, and when our eyes met, his ſeemed to ſolicit my pardon for the od-

dity

dity of his former behaviour. I did not ſuffer myſelf to be moved with this ſeeming penitence, I did not think my reſentment ſufficiently evinced, and freely acknowledge I tried a thouſand little ſtratagems to give him pain. He wanted to engage me in converſation; I ſaw it, and ſtudiouſly avoided him; but my partner going out to order a negus, he took his place, before I had it in my power to leave mine. "Is it poſſible, that Miſs Rut-
"land, ſaid he, can ſuffer reſentment to
"rankle in her boſom?—I have offended
"—I feel it---I feel too that I am unhap-
"py--will no atonement be accepted?"
I looked another way, pretending not to hear what he ſaid. "For God's ſake,
"Madam, (taking my hand) turn not
"from me thus ſcornfully---I have been
"to blame. Oh! Olivia, did you know
"what I have ſuffered this evening---
"mortified

" mortified with being refuſed the honour
" of your hand, and to ſee that hand be-
" ſtowed on a wretch the moſt deſpicable
" of human beings, deprived me of rea-
" ſon---I forgot his character was un-
" known to you--I thought of him only as
" the man that obſtructed my happineſs
" as a man for whom I was rejected."

" And pray, Sir, who informed you
" he was the moſt deſpicable of human
" beings?"

" Cheap as you hold me, Madam, I
" ſcorn to traduce the fame even of my
" enemy---nothing but your ſafety, Miſs
" Rutland, ſhould prevail on me to tell
" you he is the moſt abandoned."

" Hold, Sir Harry, hold; it is early
" enough to enquire into his private cha-
" racter---I have not yet thought of him
" as a lover; but let me tell you, Sir, the
" care you are pleaſed to expreſs for my

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" as a lover; but let me tell you, Sir, the
" care you are pleaſed to expreſs for my

" *ſafety*,

" *ſafety*, is both officious and unneceſ-
" ſary---trouble yourſelf no farther with
" it, I beſeech you."

" By the great God, Madam, ſwell-
" ing with anger, though you ſcorn me,
" I muſt be heard. That fellow---"

" Fellow! nay, Sir Harry, you are quite
" ſcurrilous; that gentleman has, I think,
" an infinite fund of humour, and let me
" tell you, it is my diſpoſition rather to
" ſing with the nightingale than ſigh with
" the turtle." Seeing a party of my ac-
quaintance at the other ſide of the room, I left him with an air of unconcern, and join'd them; however, what I had juſt heard of my partner made ſuch an impreſſion on me, that I danced no more, and ſoon after returned home perfectly diſpleaſed with Sir Harry---not quite in temper with myſelf.

The next morning an expreſs called him

him to North-hill---too early for a viſit, and Lady Oſwall ſuppoſed at the point of death, which made it impoſſible to wait a more ſeaſonable hour, he ſet out without the form of taking leave. But why do I repeat an incident to which you are no ſtranger? He teazes me perpetually with letters---why give himſelf that trouble?---it is needleſs---I will not be importun'd---I will not pardon him---no, his audacity is unpardonable. The character of Lord —— may be infamous, nay, I am aſſured, he is at this time obliged to fly his country for a crime of the blackeſt nature---but then did not Sir Harry dare to inſult me with his protection? Nothing but my ſafety? Wretch! poſitively I hate him more than ever.

Judge, my deareſt ſiſter, with your uſual candour, then will you acquit Olivia, and condemn only Sir Harry Oſwall.

LETTER

LETTER VIII.

From the ſame to the ſame.

MISCHIEVOUS! did I ſay? good heaven! what a diabolical wretch! Of whom think you I am ſpeaking?--- Why, of Lady Stenton. I told you ſhe was inclined to miſchief; many are the ſpecimens ſhe has given of her genius that way -but ſuch a ſcheme as I have juſt detected her in, almoſt freezes me with horror. I accidentally yeſterday ſaw a letter on the ſtair-caſe, and picking it up, found it addreſſed to Lady Bell Haſtings. Suppoſing her ladyſhip had dropped it from her pocket, I carried it to her---ſhe examined the hand, and I ſaw her countenance alter. Caſting her

eye

eye on the contents, ſhe fell back on her chair, "My God! exclaimed ſhe, what "an unfortunate creature am I? Ah! "Miſs Rutland, had my father known "the blackneſs of Lady Stenton's ſoul, "would he have left me to her care?" Here ſhe was interrupted by a flood of tears. I endeavoured to conſole her, and ſhe ſoon recovered her diſorder enough to give me the few particulars I am going to relate.

A young gentleman, to whom Lord Stenton was guardian, from a long acquaintance with Lady Bell, and expe-rience of her ever amiable diſpoſition, (theſe you may ſuppoſe were not her own words) became early attached to her ladyſhip; her father having no other objection to their union but what a few years might remove, his ward being only twenty, Lady Bell ſcarce eighteen, ſent

him abroad to complete his education, promiſing to join their hands at his return. With this promiſe, and the indulgence of writing to each other, the young folks parted.

About ſix months after this period, unfortunately for my friend, his lordſhip came to Rutland-houſe on a viſit; Miſs Craven, through my father's bounty, made an appearance perfectly genteel; ſhe found means of ingratiating herſelf with our noble gueſt—he married her—a viſit of three months ſucceeded—Lady Bell was of the party—after which ſhe carried off her prize in triumph. Never ſhall I forget our regret at being ſeparated from the infatuating hypocrite—Lady Bell was as much deceived as ourſelves—my lord ten times more than either; for at his death he left his daughter, while

ſhe

ſhe remained ſingle, perſon and fortune, entirely in her power.

As ſoon as the young gentleman abroad was informed of his lordſhip's deceaſe, he wrote to both ladies of his propoſed return, tenderly reminding his miſtreſs of her father's promiſe. Her affections were ſo ſteadily engaged to this deſerving youth, that ſhe waited his arrival with the utmoſt impatience. The very day came, on which he was expected---it came---it went again, and Lady Bell was not happy: Six months cloſed in the ſame manner---her ſuſpence, her grief, her anxiety, ſhe ſays, is not to be expreſſed; yet ſo well did ſhe conceal theſe emotions, that they eſcaped the notice of her friends; even I did not perceive them. Perhaps ſhe would never have heard his name more, if fate had

not thrown the following letter in my way, the ſame I have already mentioned.

" To Lady Bell Haſtings.

" Madam,

" THE preſumptive hopes I have " dared to entertain, you oblige me to " relinquiſh---with what conflicts I re- " linquiſh them, can be only felt by a " heart that has doated, that has been de- " ceived like mine. I read Lady Sten- " ton's letter, written by your directions " —a thouſand times I read it—her la- " dyſhip's authority I doubt---I doubt " my own ſenſes---I doubt every thing, " rather than think you, Madam, capable " of infidelity: Why do I call it infidelity? " Oh, forgive me! It is not *you*---it is " your father that has made me wretch- " ed. A paſſion ſpringing from the mind

" muſt

" muſt coſt many a pang to eradicate.
" Had mine been the child of fancy---
" had I attached myſelf merely to ex-
" ternal graces, the trial would have
" been leſs ſevere. I never told you your
" perſon was lovely---I feared to flatter
" *that* at the expence of your underſtand-
" ing---but often I told myſelf, if Lady
" Bell Haſtings was a cottager, I would
" prefer her to the moſt dazzling beauty
" ---I would adore her affability, her
" gentleneſs, her delicate ſenſibility, and
" think her the moſt perfect of her ſex.
" Why did you ſubſcribe your name to
" Lady Stenton's fatal letter? But for *that*,
" I could, I would have deceived myſelf--
" I would have believed your father did
" not exact from you, in his laſt mo-
" ments, an oath, that you would never
" ſee me more. What! what! could I
" have done to offend him?

" It

" It would have been ſoothing, it " would have been compaſſionate, had " you yourſelf revealed this fatal turn in " our affairs---but you was in tears—you " was too deeply affected. Ah! is it " poſſible, Madam, you ſympathize in " my affliction? I am obliged to Lady " Stenton for her tenderneſs in commu- " nicating my misfortune---I ſhall ever " revere her for the maternal fondneſs " ſhe expreſſes for your ladyſhip. You " forbid me to write---you wiſh me to " know felicity---we muſt learn to forget " each other. I have tranſgreſſed your la- " dyſhip's firſt command---I will no more " tranſgreſs it---I will no more preſume " to trouble you with my complainings. " Your wiſhes for my felicity muſt be " ineffectual---the taſk *too* of learning to " forget each other, may be eaſy to you; " my part I cannot undertake: No, Ma-

"dam, till there is an end to my life,
"there can be none to my attachment."

Matchleſs cunning! Well, Harriot, do you rightly underſtand the Machiavelian contrivance of this miſcreant woman? You ſee what kind of a letter ſhe has ſent abroad---becauſe, forſooth, Lady Bell is too much affected to write; you ſee too, that Lady Bell has actually ſubſcribed her name to this pretty fable of the *dying father and dutiful daughter:* But can you gueſs by what artifice ſhe accompliſhed this laſt inimitable ſtroke of her inimitable performance? I'll tell you: Lady Bell has recollected, that ſoon after the death of my lord, his amiable relict brought a paper, which, ſhe pretended, was an order to be given jointly by them, regarding neceſſary alterations to be made on ſome diſtant eſtate; Lady Bell having

at that time no reaſon to ſuſpect a fraud, ſigned without heſitation, nor even enquired into the nature of this ſuppoſed order, though, had ſhe done it, no doubt ſuch an order might have been produced.

Her ladyſhip intends to take no notice of the diſcovery we have made---ſhe propoſes writing to her lover immediately, but is greatly diſtreſſed leſt a letter may not find him; for, though his laſt was from Paris, it ſeems, by the date, Lady Stenton has had it in her poſſeſſion more than five months: To me it appears a matter of wonder, that ſhe has not deſtroyed this teſtimony of her iniquity---the ſtimulative great motive can be no other, than the power left her by Lord Stenton, over his daughter, till ſhe had diſpoſed of herſelf to a more eligible protector.

I have this inſtant a card from Mrs. Keith---her arrival rejoices me---it opens

to me a thouſand ſcenes new and charming. I am not yet tired of life, or ſatiated with pleaſure; but rather than continue under the roof of this abominable woman, I think I would come down again to Eadon-heath. No great compliment, you ſay---no, indeed! I ſpoke in the ſincerity of my heart.

Enjoy your *rural* concerts, and your *rural* beauty, good Sir Michael. I proteſt, Harriot, did you know the fine things he has ſaid of a certain perſon, you would briſtle up and look like one of us. Really, child, I could wiſh he might flatter you into a little ſelf-conſequence—but that I fear is impoſſible. So, as I was going to ſay, Brother, when your good aunt and couſins are tired of me, and when I am tired of the town, down I whirl in a chaiſe and four, for expedition, put on a pretty demure look,

throw

throw aſide all my London airs, dreſs with the neat ſimplicity of my ſiſter, and captivate all the ruſticks in your village.

At preſent I have no notion of an invitation from a goldfinch---a card from Lady Racket by the hands of a dirty footman, is a thouſand times more eligible---this I underſtand—the other is above my comprehenſion. Even whilſt I betray ſo much levity, my heart bleeds for Lady Bell; but had I indulged this ſympathetic ſoftneſs, this tender pity, I know what would have been your conſtruction; truly, that Sir Harry Oſwall had flown away with my vivacity. No! it is not in *his* power to add one moment's gloom to the days of

OLIVIA RUTLAND.

LETTER

LETTER IX.

From the ſame to the ſame.

LADY Stenton and I are happily parted, with a deal of unmeaning, common-place civility. Her ladyſhip exceedingly ſorry ſhe could not have the honour of my company longer---wiſhes it had been in her power to make her family more agreeable—always retains a grateful ſenſe of Miſs Rutland's and Lady Leſley's former friendſhip---mentions my ever honoured father with reſpectful tenderneſs—and even ſqueezes out a tear of hypocriſy to his memory.

I ſhall ſee Lady Bell often, but have ſo contrived it, that ſhe gives me a note whenever Lady Stenton is engaged abroad;

abroad; by which caution I ſhall avoid the mortification of meeting her, at leaſt in her own houſe.

Lady Bell has wrote to her lover; whether he may ever receive her letter, or whether he may not receive it too late, is a very doubtful point. I confeſs he ſeems to have a deal of conſtancy in his nature---nay, we will allow him more than falls to the ſhare of one man in a million---yet, no hope to nouriſh and ſupport that conſtancy, may it not abate? may not another find the way to his heart, through the ſame windings and turnings by which it has once been taken? Certainly all this is poſſible. Alas! poor ſoul, ſhe has doubts enough of her own---I do not augment them with mine---but indeed they ſo fill my heart and head, that I can think of little elſe.

How

How different Mrs. Keith from Lady Stenton! how very amiable her daughters! The eldeſt, I muſt acknowledge, has ſomehow ſtolen more into my affections than the other---this partiality I attribute to the equality of our years, and a kind of ſimilarity of diſpoſition. Our intimacy began in Scotland, it is now ſo much improved, that Lady Bell and I have actually taken her without reſerve into our confidence—I conceal nothing from either—I have even diſcovered the inſult I received from Sir Harry Oſwall at Lord F——'s---they know how thoroughly I deſpiſe him---they know my reſolution never more, if I can avoid it, to hear his name mentioned. Do not aſk if they approve or diſapprove of my juſt reſentment---I know what you would. Miſs Keith is here---pardon me a moment---ſhe brings a letter from Sir Michael

chael—her eyes, her ſmile is full of joy--ſhe even ſeems to breathe joy---joy is in her very foot-ſtep---ſhe tells me ſhe is the happieſt mortal breathing---leaves me with precipitation---ſteps back---ſays I ſhall ſoon know a turn in her fortune that will tranſport me---I entreat her to ſtay---I tell her my curioſity is on the rack---ſhe promiſes to return ſhortly, and hurries from my chamber---ſhe ſays I ſhall be tranſported---ſhe ſays true---I ſhall feel all her felicity with the warmeſt effuſions of friendſhip. Now, good Sir Michael, for your letter---it comes in a lucky moment---I was preparing to chide both Harriot and you for a ſilence of fifteen days. Well, the ſeal is broke---and now!

LETTER

LETTER X.

Sir MICHAEL LESLEY to OLIVIA.

ALAS, Oſwall! my amiable, my unfortunate Oſwall! Olivia! can you really deſpiſe Sir Harry? Can you ſpeak the ſentiments of your heart, yet declare you hate him? Can you deſire never more to behold him? If arrived to this happy ſtate of indifferenee, proceed. But, oh, Siſter! ſhould one tender ſentiment lie concealed, ſtop here! Sir Harry Oſwall is no more! It is not your unkindneſs that deſtroys him---his diſſolution was a decay of nature, brought on, perhaps, by his *too* cloſe attendance on Lady Oſwall. Virtues he had many! yet he had offended you---think only on

the

the latter. Lady Leſley would have wrote, but feels too ſeverely---ſhe regrets you had not been apprized of his ill ſtate of health, before the dreadful criſis of his fate—yet in one of her former letters did ſhe not mention that I was prevented from writing, by my cloſe attendance on a ſick friend? This friend was my valuable Oſwall. Did I not tell you, when I thought he merited my reſentment, that he ſuffered from another hand? To what has that hand reduced him!

Should your chearfulneſs be clouded by this event, the gaieties of London will ſoon diſperſe the vapour---do not, if inclined to melancholy, indulge its growth by ſedentary retirement---cruſh it early beneath the foot of diſſipation. You once declared, it was not in the power of Sir Harry Oſwall to add a moment's gloom to your days---how ſeaſonable this

decla-

declaration! how greatly it conſoles my wife! If her Olivia does not ſuffer, ſhe ſhall be happy----her every wiſh, her hopes, her fears, her joys, her grief, are mine—if Olivia is afflicted, we are afflicted—if ſhe is chearful, we are chearful. You ſee, my dear girl, how much it is in your power to give us either pain or pleaſure. Can you heſitate a moment?

LETTER XI.

Miſs KEITH to Lady LESLEY.

WE are all in the utmoſt conſterna-tion! Miſs Rutland determines to leave us—Sir Harry Oſwall's death affects her more than I can expreſs. My ſiſter accompanies her to Scotland---to-morrow they begin their journey. I am detained in town by the commands of my mother, or would myſelf have attended her to your Ladyſhip. She this morning fainted on reading Sir Michael's letter, I found it in her motionleſs hand, as I came to communicate an affair, which I knew would give her ſatisfaction. At preſent I wave the ſubject---it concerns only myſelf, and you will ſoon hear it from

from my mother. I write in haſte; Miſs Rutland entreats I will not leave her---. yet I give her no conſolation---I do not prevent her tears from flowing. Who could have imagined ſhe had loved Sir Harry ſo paſſionately? I wiſh we could detain her with us, but that is impoſſible. London ſhe calls a deſert---ſhe hates it for betraying her from Scotland---ſhe would ſtart at the mention of company---to Eadon-heath ſhe flies for conſolation, yet declares ſhe knows not how to meet the face either of Sir Michael or your Ladyſhip. Adieu, my dear Couſin, &c. &c.

LETTER XII.

Olivia to Miſs Keith.

I FIND myſelf in Scotland---I find myſelf in the very houſe where I have paſſed a thouſand agreeable hours with---Oh! Miſs Keith, he is gone for ever. Sharp-pang'd remorſe purſues me---there is no running from my deſtiny. Write ſoon, I conjure you---I am unfit for every thing---I know not what I am---Oh, yes! I am the perfidious, ungrateful creature, whom a fooliſh levity has made wretched.

LETTER XIII.

Olivia to Lady Bell Hastings.

WHY does my ſiſter ſmile? Why does Sir Michael entreat me to be chearful? Why will they not talk to me of Sir Harry Oſwall?

Indeed, Lady Bell, I am diſappointed--I expected to find myſelf in the arms of friends who would be indulgent to my weakneſs---who would even ſympathize in my affliction. Sir Michael and his Harriot are too happy in themſelves to enter deeply into the diſtreſſes of another--they affect ſurprize to ſee me ſhed tears for a man for whom it was evident I had no partiality. Alas! is not this upbraiding my inſincerity? Can it be poſſible they

yet doubt the ſenſibility of my heart? Is not the veil removed under which I have fooliſhly concealed it? They love me not! They take a pleaſure in obſtructing the only enjoyment for which I have *now* a reliſh—they drive me from ſolitude. I am not ſuffered to ſigh a moment in private---the only favour I experience, is the liberty of retiring with Miſs Sally Keith, when company comes to the houſe---even then, you ſee, I am not ſuffered to be alone. Is not this hard, very hard uſage? What ſignifies their tenderneſs, their careſſes, their watching my very looks for opportunities to make me happy in common matters, yet withhold the only indulgence my heart pants after? If this is kindneſs, even in kindneſs there may be cruelty.

Domeſtic felicity never looked ſo inviting, ſo lovely, as now it ſoars above

my

my reach---here, like the meridian ſun, it ſhines in full ſplendor. Ah, Lady Bell! you knew not Sir Harry Oſwall—you know not from what bright proſpects I am utterly excluded: Perſon was his leaſt perfection, yet even there lovely beyond imagination---wiſdom, gentleneſs, humanity, ſoul-piercing eloquence, filial duty. Great God! were not theſe his peculiar excellencies! I was not ſtupidly inſenſible, but playfully unthinking—I loved his virtues, but I loved them without ſteadineſs. I might in time perhaps have forgot my unpardonable conduct enough to have ſupported life without repining; yet, ah! one circumſtance, one inſupportable circumſtance, forbids the ſelf-reconciliation: Did he not laviſh, in his attendance on a giddy, ungrateful creature, a large ſhare of his moderate patrimony? How has that creature re-

paid his tenderneſs, his generoſity? With contempt, with ſeeming diſregard, to which her heart never aſſented. Let me try to forget the perſon I moſt hate---let me endeavour to forget myſelf.

You, Lady Bell, are bleſt---how ſuperlatively bleſt! No reproaches to fear from your own heart, or from the man deſervedly honoured with your regard: Forgive me, Madam; the thought of your innocence brings my own guilt before me in too glaring colours---I lay down my pen---I cannot bear the contraſt.

LETTER XIV.

Miſs KEITH to OLIVIA.

WHERE is the ſprightly, the admired, the love-inſpiring Olivia Rutland? Can it be that ſhe determines to loll out her days under a ſpreading tree; to increaſe the river with her tears; and to liſten to no love-ſtories, but thoſe that are told by plaintive Philomel? Poh! for ſhame! rouſe yourſelf, my dear---after a little more ſighing, you will forſake your romantic ideas---you will lay aſide your languiſhing airs of tenderneſs---you will return again to London---you will ſhine at court, at routs, at balls, at plays, and aſſemblies. Believe me, or believe me not, as you pleaſe, a time muſt come

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come---it is not far off---when Love, and its inſinuating companion, Hope, will once more take poſſeſſion of your boſom. I know the man who doats on you to diſtraction---I know the man who, if I am not egregiouſly miſtaken, will make you forget, at firſt ſight, all you now feel for the loſs of Sir Harry Oſwall.

How often have you declared my diſpoſition reſembled your own? In the days of your glory I thought it flattery, but now, ſuch a mere inſipid, inanimate being! ſuch a poor, deſpairing ſhepherdeſs! I abſolutely diſclaim the honour.

Some few days ſince I happened to be a principal party at the nuptials of Mr. Grafton: To divert your melancholy, liſten whilſt I tell you a ſhort ſtory of him and his fair bride.

Propitious fortune brought them within ken of each other at Mrs. Betterton's rout:

rout: When he entered, the lady was engaged at play, nor did ſhe obſerve him, till, letting fall ſpadille, he preſented it with a grace that made her give him a glance of particular attention. From this moment the hero of my tale was remarkably aſſiduous in his devoirs—the company ſtaid ſupper—his attachment became viſible, and the next day ſhe was rallied by many of her acquaintance, on the important conqueſt. Well, the poor girl's heart was really entrapped, and, after the firſt interview, Mr. Grafton found means of being frequently in the ſame parties with her. A fair character, an infinity of humour, and permanent ſenſe, joined to eſtabliſh an intereſt in her affections, before ſhe had prudently conſidered the diſparity Fortune had placed between them; his poſſeſſions being ſo large, that the greateſt heireſs in Britain might

might have thought a connection with him extremely to her advantage. She had been acquainted with him but a few weeks, when her mother commanded her attendance in Scotland; this lady had never ſeen Mr. Grafton, nor did ſhe know there was ſuch a man in the world, her daughter thinking it would be rather premature to mention him in her letters, unleſs he gave her further reaſon to believe him ſerious. Two days preceding that in which ſhe was deſtined to leave England, her lover gave a magnificent entertainment, to which her guardian and his family were alſo invited. What a day of days, Olivia! his ſoul ſpoke at his eyes---it ſpoke a profuſion of tender proteſtations, nor did his tongue fail to confirm them; he heard, with tokens of aſtoniſhment and concern, her intention of going to Scotland; he talked of a viſit

ſit to her family, on which his happineſs depended; and preſſed for the honour of attending her to the North; but this requeſt ſhe abſolutely refuſed.

There was a young fellow preſent, who had frequent occaſion for his purſe, and to whom it was open without reſerve: A matrimonial ſcheme would have been the deſtruction of his golden harveſt, he knew the lady, though her fortune was ſmall, of a rank which ſet her above being trifled with---he trembled for his declining intereſt, and called a council within himſelf how to prevent the impending danger. In the midſt of an intereſting *tête-à-tête* between the lovers, he diſappeared, but returned in a few minutes, introducing another equally intereſted, who, with a tolerable perſon, and intolerable aſſurance, was eſteemed properly qualified to bring about the mighty undertaking.

dertaking. There had formerly been a ſlight acquaintance between the lady and this other redoubtable champion; ſhe had ſpoke to him freely of his faults, he hated her for holding up the faithful mirror; and now a glorious moment for revenge offered. From his friend he learned the ſituation of affairs, and paying his reſpects to the lady, with an aſſumed air of the moſt paſſionate tenderneſs to Mr. Grafton, in a manner which ſpoke them of ſome degree of intimacy, he took his place by the former, addreſſing her in a ſtile which ſhe could only liſten to with pleaſure from Mr. Grafton; he even inſiſted on her correſpondence whilſt ſhe ſtaid in Scotland---I ſay inſiſted, he did not requeſt it as a favour, but ſeemed to demand it as his particular prerogative. Her amazement was great, but, far from ſeeing into his real deſign,

ſhe

ſhe contented herſelf with rejecting him abſolutely and diſdainfully. The lord of her heart appeared melancholy, which ſhe pleaſingly attributed to the near day of her departure, not to any ſuſpicion of a man ſhe thought even below her reſentment. In this opinion ſhe was confirmed, by the agitation Mr. Grafton betrayed as he led her to a coach---" I loſe " you, my angel, ſaid he--you leave Eng- " land---you will not permit me to attend " you in your excurſion to Scotland; but " know, I am determined to follow--your " guardian, Madam, ſhall authorize my " viſit." Ah! the ſweet delight ſhe felt at this declaration—my heart tells me it was exquiſite.

I can't recollect her anſwer—not extremely cruel, I believe, and ſtepping into the coach, where the company had ſeated themſelves, ſhe bad him adieu, with

a voice of the greateſt ſoftneſs ſhe could aſſume—the ſide glaſs was down---her hand reſted on the door--fie!---- why ſuppoſe it deſignedly? However, if you will have it ſo, he availed himſelf of the indulgence, and preſſed it reſpectfully to his lips more than once. In a raven's tone the footman cried, "Go on!"---the coachman gave a magic ſtroke to his horſes, and away they flew---but not till Mr. Grafton had given the love-intangled damſel a warm aſſurance of attending her guardian the next morning.

This was the longeſt night ſhe ever experienced--eight-and-forty hours lagged on in the ſame tedious manner---no lover appeared—no guardian was conſulted, and in a frame of mind uneaſy, fretful, and diſappointed, ſhe left England.

One would think, my dear, Scotland was the rendezvous of diſappointed nymphs.

Hear

Hear how my enamorato concludes her ſtory: "Pluck up, faith." Believe me, your's will end pretty near in the ſame words, pronounced over you by a gentleman of holy and honourable function. Mr. Grafton, to whom I now return, intended all he ſaid---he was in love---he did not conſider as a bar the difference of fortune---he rejoiced in a peculiar benevolence of heart, that he could give ſo undoubted a proof of his adoration.

The next morning, as he was preparing for his viſit, who ſhould drop in but the gentleman of whom I have already made *diſhonourable* mention. A converſation, which the lady has not been able to prevail on her huſband to diſcover, immediately enſued, ſo much to her diſadvantage, and facts ſo indiſputably proved, that he laid aſide his intentions in her favour, bleſſed his happy eſcape,

and thought her even below an apology for breaking his engagement. In this deluſion Mr. Grafton continued till the lady's family returned to town, which was ſooner than propoſed, on account of their receiving a very amiable viſitor. Again he ſaw his adorable, as ſhe was ſtepping into a chair---again his flame rekindled---he almoſt forgot the follies of which ſhe was accuſed---he found it for his ſafety to have them re-enumerated, and went to the lodging of her traducer, that his reſentment, which began to waver, might receive additional force. In the moſt pitiable ſituation did he find him---juſt brought home, mortally wounded from a duel behind Montague-houſe----filled with compunction, he did the lady what juſtice he could, by declaring his own villainy and her innocence. An act of oblivion paſſed---the dying wretch re-

ceived a ſincere pardon. Mr. Grafton flew to his miſtreſs---reconciled himſelf to her affections---and made a public avowal of his paſſion.

Unuſed to diſguiſe her ſentiments, and finding her ſoul full of joyful perturbations, ſhe left her lover with her mother and ſiſter, intending to communicate her happineſs to a beloved friend—that friend ſhe found at her pen---ſhe would not interrupt her ---ſhe left a letter on the table---ſhe withdrew, promiſing to return ſoon---ſhe did return. Well, Olivia! can you not gueſs the reſt? Can you not ſee Jenny Keith in the forſaken damſel? Can you not diſcover yourſelf in the amiable viſitor, in the beloved friend? Do you forget my flying to your room, alarming your curioſity, and leaving it unſatisfied? Or, do you forget I brought a letter from Sir

Michael Leſley, which I took from your Martha at the door.

So now you have my whole hiſtory before you, the church-ſcene excepted.

I am at this very time preparing to take upon me the character of Conſul's Lady at the Hague. The fear of letting him go without me—the happineſs of ſecuring him to myſelf—and the pleaſure of obliging him, hurried me to St. Margaret's chapel ſome months ſooner than I ſhould otherwiſe have gone. In three weeks we begin our route for Holland—I have ſent my own ſervant, in whom I can confide, to attend my ſiſter to town---I muſt ſee her, or I ſhall not leave England ſatisfied—beſides, my mother will more than ever want her company.

A thouſand bleſſings are in ſtore for my friend. Remember this prognoſtication; I may ſee England again—but never

ver again ſhall I ſee Miſs Rutland: Yet I ſhall embrace my Olivia, in full poſſeſſion of felicity—happy as ſhe deſerves to be ---happy as I am---greater happineſs falls not to the ſhare of mortals.

LETTER XV.

OLIVIA to Mrs. GRAFTON.

SURELY my friends are *all* in combination againſt me! inſtead of compaſſionate ſoothings, I eternally experience ſharp-pointed, killing raillery. I ſigh out my hours unpitied---perhaps I have not deſerved pity---but can *you*—*you* who know my heart---can *you* ſuppoſe it will ever admit a ſecond love? Return to the world! But I proteſt againſt neither---you would laugh at my proteſtations---you would call them romantick.

Forget Sir Harry Oſwall! Attach myſelf to another! Give me patience! Indeed, Madam, you are very cruel, or very unfeeling.

What

What have I ſaid? My dear Mrs. Grafton, forgive this peeviſhneſs---it falls not on you ſingly---my brother, my ſiſter, have their ſhare. Good God! I wonder they will condeſcend to treat ſo inſufferable a temper with indulgence---indulgence has ſpoiled it---were I uſed leſs tenderly, I might yet recover myſelf---I was not always thus---I hope I am not habitually ill-diſpoſed.

Sir Michael and my ſiſter ſeldom leave me---they drag me into the fields---they ſtroll with me into the gardens—they ſurprize me with a thouſand rural entertainments---inceſſantly do they ſtrive to divert my melancholy. I am not inſenſible to ſuch affection; but how ſhall I command my heart to receive it as I ought? I would thank them on my knees, if I might be ſuffered to wander whole days alone---I would liſten with ecſtaſy,

would they talk to me of Sir Harry Oſwall---his very name is avoided, or if inadvertently mentioned, it is not with regret---I know they loved him. Why then to leſſen mine, do they ſmother their own ſorrow? How much more conſolatory---how ſweetly ſympathetick to weep together! You are really going to leave England! A thouſand bleſſings follow you---receive my warmeſt congratulations---preſent them to Mr. Grafton---tell him I beſpeak his friendſhip.

If my mind, all dark and gloomy, can ſend out one bright wiſh, it ſhall be for a continuance of your felicity.

I pine at the thought of loſing my little agreeable companion. Mrs. Milworth arrived on Monday---to-morrow ſhe is to take your ſiſter from one family of love to another---ſhe will embrace you for me---ſhe will tell you how truely dear you are to me.

LETTER XVI.

Lady BELL HASTINGS to OLIVIA.

GOOD heaven! were not the firſt advances her's, or could ſo mean a reptile lift up his ambitious hopes to the widow of Lord Stenton! I could forgive her cruelty to me---I could forgive every thing, rather than wipe from my memory the indelible blot ſhe has caſt on our family. You do not, cannot underſtand me, Olivia---let me try if I can enough command my temper, to give you the particulars which happened yeſterday.

I went as uſual to my lady's dreſſing-room, breakfaſt was on the table, but a conſiderable time elapſed before her la-

dyſhip

dyſhip appeared. The firſt alteration that ſtruck me, was her dreſs, changed from ſable weeds to white ſatin. You know I have lately carried myſelf with great reſerve, yet I could not avoid ſaying, "This, Madam, I ſhould ſuppoſe "was your Ladyſhip's bridal day, did not "the too recent memory of my father "forbid the ſuppoſition."

She made no reply; and, ſpeaking without the moſt diſtant ſuſpicion, I never thought of examining her countenance, which, I ſuppoſe, was not at that time particularly ſerene.

Miſs Rutland, you have ſeen this profound hypocrite—you have ſeen her inſinuating, artful ſmiles—yet never ſaw you the infatuating ſyren in perfection. Two forms ſhe can at pleaſure aſſume—no wonder if my father ſaw only the angel, that he was deceived---he had not diſco-

diſcovered her other, her more natural ſhape.

All affability, good-humour and condeſcenſion at the tea-table, that removed, ſhe obſerved how extremely inviting it appeared without, and courted me to a turn in the garden; having long reſolved to keep on fair terms, leſt, from a ſuſpicion of the truth, ſhe might find means a ſecond time to fruſtrate my views of happineſs, I accepted her invitation.

As we proceeded in our walk, ſhe put her arm in mine, and ſaid, with a look ſo like ſincerity, as might have been eaſily miſtaken for it, "Never mother "loved her own child as I do you, Lady "Bell---not altogether for the ſake of my "poor departed lord, whoſe loſs *you* can "witneſs how much, how ſincerely I "have lamented—"

"Indeed,

"Indeed, Madam, interrupting her, "I am perfectly ſatisfied, it cannot be on "my father's account, that I have re- "ceived from your Ladyſhip unmerited, "and unexpected treatment---your own "heart produced it: If a ſoil is fertile, "the fruit will *in its kind* be extraor- "dinary."

Gueſs, Madam, how I intended this; but my meaning was miſconſtrued—ſhe went on with reanimated effrontery,

"You flatter agreeably, my charming "daughter—let me honour myſelf by "calling you ſuch---the merit you allow "me, juſtice bids me diſclaim---it is not "the goodneſs of my heart, it is the ex- "cellent qualifications of your own, that "have endeared you to me."

What, thought I, will be the end of thoſe violent profeſſions---perhaps ſhe ſuſ- pects I know more than ſhe intended to reveal,

reveal, and takes this method to diſarm, or at leaſt to ſoften my reſentment.

"Your Ladyſhip does me *too* great ho-
"nour---ſo little am I prepared for this
"*extraordinary* indulgence, that, inſtead
"of receiving it with grace, I confeſs
"myſelf ſtupefied with amazement."

"Why call my indulgence extraordi-
"nary? Why are you amazed at it, my
"love? If I have ever treated you with
"leſs unreſerve, it has been occaſioned
"by a reſtraint in your behaviour. You
"conſider me, perhaps, only as the wife
"of Lord Stenton---as the woman whom
"you was compelled to call mother---
"throw off all reſtraint---forget every tie
"but that of friendſhip; let us embrace
"as ſiſters."

Her hypocriſy really ſhocked me; but reſolved to hear how far ſhe would carry her extravagance, and to what it pointed,

I endeavoured to throw a veil over my aſtoniſhment.

" You ſeclude yourſelf too much from " the world, Lady Bell---why are you " not oftener ſeen in public? Sometimes " you pay a private viſit---permit me to " introduce my acquaintance to your La- " dyſhip---I ſhall be happy in your com- " pany, they will eſteem themſelves ho- " noured."

" Certainly, Madam, you mean to " overpower me with favours: From this " I muſt beg to be excuſed."

" And why beg to be excuſed?"

" Becauſe, Madam, I have been a " good deal uſed to home—I have con- " tracted from uſe a kind of habitual " love for books and ſolitude---except a " few ſelect friends, and thoſe a very " few, I have no deſire for company."

" Well, my dear, you are happy in a " charming

" charming diſpoſition. Pray, have you
" ſeen your friend, Miſs Keith, ſince her
" marriage with Mr. Grafton? I am glad,
" as being a favourite of your's, that ſhe
" is ſo fortunately ſettled. They go to
" Holland the beginning of the week;
" what ſay you to a tour of three or four
" months? The opportunity is deſirable
" --it is what I have long projected-- if
" you have no objection, after we have
" ſeen your friend to the Hague, we will
" abſolutely take a trip to the court of
" Pruſſia."

You may imagine, Miſs Rutland, had her propoſal been ever ſo eligible, her company ever ſo unexceptionable, I ſhould not have acquieſced, expecting whom I expect. My refuſal diſconcerted her; ſhe hoped I would conſider of it, her heart was really ſet upon the ſcheme---it was my peace, it was my ſatisfaction ſhe conſulted.

ſulted. Wanting to know how and in what manner ſhe conſulted them, I repaid art with art, and though I did not give my abſolute conſent, I appeared leſs and leſs averſe to the intended tour.

Again ſhe was all ſmiles—again I was her dear Lady Bell. "And now, ſaid "the deep deſigner, I'll tell you the ad- "vantages I propoſe to you from this "little expedition. I know the ſenſibility "of your heart—I know how greatly "it muſt have ſuffered from a late ſlight "—don't bluſh."

Heavens! could I avoid bluſhing? her inſinuation kindled the flame of anger on my countenance.

"I ſay, do not bluſh, my dear---way- "ward fancy never betrayed your judge- "ment---you received your lover with "the ſanction of a parent---your father "was deceived---you were both deceived

"---you

"—you both thought him amiable.

"Ah! the deteſted ingrate! Compoſe "yourſelf, my Love, baniſh that confu- "ſion---let the guilty periſh, let the "guilty be confounded."

Monſter! Don't you think, Olivia, I was ſurpriſingly calm not to tear her eyes out? Yes! I will try, thought I, if it be poſſible to penetrate thy conſcience. I turned ſhort---I ſaid, with as ſtern a voice and as ſtern a look as I could command,

"Suppoſe, Madam, the guilty are "without ſhame---ſuppoſe, their crimes "are ſo many--ſo complicated--as to mix "with their very conſtitutions, and be- "come a part of themſelves; will they "bluſh? will they be confounded? "Alas, my father! indeed, as Lady Sten- "ton ſays, you have been deceived! ah, "how miſerably deceived!"

Even this did not penetrate. Mark with what cunning ſhe wreſted the meaning of my words.

" Notwithſtanding, as you very juſtly " ſuppoſe, your lover may be paſt re- " pugnance, (obſerve that, Olivia!) " yet, when you believed him worthy, " did you not give him a large ſhare " in your eſteem? Though undeceived " by the inattention, nay, diſreſpect with " which he has treated you, ſince the " death of my ever to be lamented " Lord, yet I am afraid a ſpark of ten- " derneſs remains, that even his ſhock- " ing ingratitude may not be able to era- " dicate."

I turned away my head—a baſiliſk would not have been more hideous.

" Pardon, my beloved daughter, par- " don a ſuppoſition which I perceive of- " fends your delicacy---it is not your reſo-

" lution I doubt, it is for his ſubtilety I
" tremble.

" Diabolical woman!

" If he ſhould return---if his fortune
" ſhould acquire an addition, he will
" kneel, he will cringe for pardon. Hear
" not the diſſembler! believe him not!
" I know mankind---I know their ſubtile
" artifices---I know all their ſnares, to en-
" trap the innocent, and unſuſpecting.

" Heaven and earth! what is it you
" tell me, Madam? But if in men there
" lies concealed all this art, all this dan-
" ger, what a terrible misfortune is it to
" fall into the hands of a miſchievous, de-
" ſigning wicked woman---I ſhould ex-
" pect more mercy from an enemy of the
" other, than from one of my own ſex."

It touched her---ſhe coloured exceſſive-
ly. " And why this obſervation, Lady
" Bell?"

" Was the inference unnatural, Ma-
" dam, conſidering our ſubject? I don't
" know what made me break in upon
" your Ladyſhip's converſation, except
" it was that thoſe wretches ſtarted to
" my imagination, and filled it with more
" horror than I could ſuppreſs."

" But having no ſuch enemies at hand,
" one may as well confine ſuch reflections
" to more private moments."

" Really, Lady Stenton, I have read,
" I have heard of women ſo very black,
" that a young, inexperienced creature
" ſhould be *never* off her guard---ſhe
" ſhould be always thinking how to avoid
" the traps laid to enſnare her."

What a ſcorpion whip does ſhe carry in her boſom! I thought ſhe would have fainted---pale guilt took poſſeſſion of her features---her lips quivered----her legs trembled---her whole frame ſuffered agi-

tation.

gitation. I aſked if ſhe was ſuddenly indiſpoſed. She pretended to have turned her ankle, and deſired I would aſſiſt her in reaching the next ſeat. The compaſſion I betrayed, for really ſomething like it I did feel, ſeeing the ſituation to which ſhe was reduced, made her believe all was yet ſafe, and that what I had ſaid was merely accidental: It was not contrition for her crimes, but fear of having them diſcovered, by which ſhe was agitated. As her ſpirits roſe, my pity, or rather weakneſs, ſunk in proportion—my reſentment acquired new vigour, whilſt I beheld her, not a moment after this ſevere attack, ſmiling in her iniquity, and purſuing it with remorſeleſs vigour:

"So, as I was going to ſay when I "met with this ugly accident, I would "have you, my dear Lady Bell, parti-"cularly guarded againſt the inſidious

" arts of a man, who, though the moſt
" vile in nature, may dare to moleſt you
" with entreaties---put it out of your own
" power to forgive him---bind yourſelf
" by a promiſe to me, that you will ne-
" ver more admit him to your converſa-
" tion—that you will never open his let-
" ters. Grant me this requeſt, and we
" will have but one mind, one ſoul, one
" purſe."

God forbid! thought I, that my ſoul ſhould bear any ſimilitude to your's.

" The honour of your family, the glory
" of your ſex require it."

" Well, Madam,"—(No, Olivia, I did not rave.)—" Well, Madam, I replied,
" on my veracity, on all I hold moſt ſa-
" cred, I here promiſe never to be re-
" conciled, unleſs the perſon you have
" mentioned can prove his innocence ſo

" clearly,

" clearly, that even your Ladyſhip ſhall
" not be able to diſpute it."

Could I not ſafely promiſe this? Has ſhe not, to her own confuſion, already proved it?

" You are very good, my Child; if it
" depends on me to clear him, he will
" ever remain hated and deſpiſed—I ne-
" ver can be the advocate of a wretch
" who has uſed you ſo unworthily."

Had I not an inexhauſtleſs fund of patience?

" Let us go to Holland—let us go to
" Germany—or, if you prefer France, I
" will attend you there. Amuſements
" of foreign courts---a new ſcene of plea-
" ſure cannot be diſguſting—you are
" young, Lady Bell---you have a tender,
" ſuſceptible heart—we muſt find out
" ſome accompliſhed youth who deſerves
" its preference—there is no ſtate ſo

" happy as loving and being belov-
" ed."

She bluſhed---ſhe ſighed---ſhe caſt her eyes on the ground with all the languiſh-ment of ſixteen.

" Your Ladyſhip, no doubt, in your
" connexion with my father, has expe-
" rienced all that height of bliſs."

" To be ſure I had a proper *eſteem* for
" Lord Stenton---but the diſparity of our
" years would not allow of a very tender
" attachment."

" How, Madam! only *eſteem* my fa-
" ther!"

" Perhaps I was *then* unacquainted
" with a ſofter paſſion than *eſteem*---If I
" gave him *all* I was poſſeſſed of, could
" I give him more---could he demand
" more?"

" Is it ſince my father's death that your
" Ladyſhip has learned the ſofter paſſion?"

" Ah,

"Ah, Lady Bell! permit me to lodge "a ſecret in your boſom---I love---I am "tenderly beloved." Unprepared for this declaration, I ſat ſilent. She continued,

"We leave England----ſhall we go "without a protector? Let me then pre- "ſent one in the perſon of my huſband."

"Your huſband!"

"Yes, my huſband. Mr. Chambers "is my huſband. Let me tell your La- "dyſhip, though he has lived a domeſtick "in your family, he will do it no diſcre- "dit as a principal."

Now, Miſs Rutland, what think you I felt?

"And is it thus, Madam, you diſ- "charge your debt of obligations to Lord "Stenton? Is it thus you honour the me- "mory of your benefactor? Chambers "your huſband! Chambers the huſband "of my father's widow!"

"None

" None of your airs, Lady Bell---hum-
" ble merit is not to be thus taunted at.
" Mr. Chambers, if you are for compa-
" riſons, may be as good, though not ſo
" great a man as your father. I could
" wiſh you to think well of his alliance--
" A reconciliation is yet in your power--
" Receive him as my huſband---Let us
" purſue our foreign ſcheme together,
" and never, from this moment, ſhall you
" form a wiſh to which I will not be in-
" dulgent. Conſider, my deareſt child,
" let us forget mutually what has paſſed:
" Come, my Love, you cannot be re-
" fractory;" and ſhe threw her confident arms about me, as I ſat overpowered with aſtoniſhment.

" Woman! woman! ſaid I, breaking
" from her, wind not thy ſerpent-arms
" about me---ſeize me not as thy prey--
" my ſoul has long diſclaimed thee."

" Auda-

"Audacious girl! exclaimed ſhe, leave "me this inſtant---go, and never more "dare to approach my preſence."

"Yes, Madam, in this command I "will be all obedience. But before we part, of *one* obligation I muſt acquit my- "ſelf, or you may ſtill think me inſen- "ſible to the debt. A letter you, Ma- "dam, condeſcended to write to my *in-* "*conſtant*, *vile*, *artful*, *deceiving* lover, "informing him of a fatal oath---by "which oath the poor daughter was ſo "deeply afflicted, that by no means could "ſhe write with her own pen, but em- "ployed that of her kind, indulgent mo- "ther-in-law."

She was ſilent as guilt could make her.

"Ah, Madam! I know of no return "adequate to ſo vaſt an obligation, and "muſt therefore remain your debtor."

Still ſhe was ſilent.

"Your

"Your Ladyſhip juſt now made a pro-
"poſal; may I not be permitted to make
"one in my turn? Accept it or not, as
"your diſcretion ſhall direct. Give up
"that power over my perſon and fortune,
"which my dear, *abuſed* father veſted
"you with, or prepare all your *crimes* for
"the inſpection of a public court, from
"which you muſt be diſmiſſed with in-
"famy. Alſo prepare yourſelf for the
"ſlights and ridicule of mankind." Say-
ing this, I flung from her, went to my apartment, ordered my woman to bring all my valuables after me, and immediately took a chair to Mrs. Keith's.

I need not tell you how cordially I was received, nor the pleaſure it gave my friends to hear of my happy eſcape from Lady Stenton's. I ſoon after deſpatched a letter by Mrs. Keith's attorney, to know her Ladyſhip's determination, and found her

her perfectly inclined to the ſpecificks. Our affairs were finiſhed that day, and this morning, I am informed, ſhe ſet off with her huſband for ſome foreign country---well may ſhe be aſhamed of appearing in her own: Yet ſhe has nothing to fear from me, for if there be any thing I deſpiſe *more* than her Ladyſhip, it is *revenge*.

In a few days I ſhall remove to a houſe of my own in St. James's Place, and there live extremely retired, till I can partake the gaieties of London with the man who is dear to my affections.

Mrs. Grafton leaves England on Monday next. Her huſband is one of the moſt agreeable creatures I ever met with. His face, notwithſtanding a pair of fine dark eyes, might be called plain to a degree; conſiſting of a ſallow complexion, noſe rather flat, and a tolerable wide mouth.

mouth. How then can I call him agreeable? Why, I'll tell you: Thoſe defects are covered by the moſt beautiful maſk imaginable, compoſed of genuine fineſpun humour; and, like other exquiſitely pleaſing objects, draws the whole attention to itſelf. This attractive charm is ſo viſible on his countenance, that even before he ſpeaks, you expect to be entertained, and are never diſappointed; he plays upon his own little imperfections with a grace infinitely becoming, and leaves no room for the ſatyrical obſervations of another. Beſides, his perſon, though far from handſome, carries a certain eaſy dignity about it, which ſpeaks the man of faſhion.

The firſt compliment he ever paid his lady, was telling her in a public company, that he had diſcovered a ſtriking likeneſs between her features and his own.

Every

Every eye was immediately fixed on Miſs Keith, and his deſign anſwered by the compliments ſhe received at his expence.

He is the leaſt ſenſible of his own, and the quickeſt in finding out the accompliſhments of another. His houſe, his equipage, his retinue, are magnificent---yet he affects them not; he has no joy in them, but as they contribute to the eaſe and ſatisfaction of his friends. Here he comes---not a word more. Adieu, my dear Olivia.

LETTER

LETTER XVII.

Sir HARRY OSWALL to Sir M. LESLEY.

LESLEY, what have you done! With the moſt friendly intentions you ruin me for ever! Why was I not conſulted? Why not informed that Miſs Rutland was at Eadon-heath? Why not tell me of the fatal fiction? All is over now. Before you engaged in this deſtructive ſcheme, you ſhould have conſidered the boundleſs generoſity, the greatneſs of your ſiſter's ſoul. Will a generous, will a great ſoul, Sir Michael, tamely brook a concerted impoſition? Forgive me, my friend, I rave---I know not what I write. I have proteſted my innocence—ſhe believes me not---I ſhall never

ver ſee her more. Plead for me--- let her ſiſter-angel, let your Harriot plead---let the ſmiling pledges of ſucceſsful love hang about the knees of Olivia---teach them to liſp my ſufferings.

Without ſeeing you, at her command I left Eadon-heath, nor dare I again approach it till ſhe recalls my ſentence. Lady Oſwall wonders at my ſudden return---the gloom I bring back has drawn on me a thouſand queſtions---her partial fondneſs for me would make her feel my diſtreſs more ſeverely than her great age, and preſent extreme weakneſs could ſupport. In vain I try after compoſure---I loſt it when I loſt Miſs Rutland.

LETTER XVIII.

Sir M. LESLEY to Sir HARRY OSWALL.

FAITH this affair, Harry, has ended quite contrary to my expectations. Perverſe girl! after mourning a dead lover, with ſighs, tears, and lamentations, to run from him when ſhe is undeceived, when ſhe knows he is ſtill alive, that ſhe may ſtill be happy; who the devil would have thought it! But courage, man! Olivia ſhall yet be your's ---by Jupiter ſhe ſhall, if to be found on this ſide heaven. The receipt of your woe-fraught epiſtle has relieved us from a deal of anxiety; till then my wife was half frantic---her ſiſter was gone from us, we knew not whither, or on what ac-

count; the latter is now plain enough; the former we ſhall ſoon diſcover. I have already wrote into England, ſhe muſt, before this can reach you, be ſafe under the protection of my Aunt Keith, or Lady Bell Haſtings.

How the duce came you at Eadonheath? Why did you not give us a hint of your intentions? Had we prepared the whimſical creature for the diſcovery, this might not have happened. You plead ignorance----you did not know the ſcheme in agitation----you did not know the pains we were taking to facilitate your happineſs. Why all this is true ---yet ſomebody is certainly to blame--- ſhall I be candid---ſhall I take the fault on myſelf? But if I have erred, which I begin to ſuſpect may be the caſe, it is, as you juſtly obſerve, with intentions the moſt friendly. Having thus plead-

ed guilty, allow me to enter on my defence.

Notwithſtanding a fine perſon, amiable diſpoſition, and permanent underſtanding, Miſs Rutland was not quite perfect: Innocent levity was her imperfection. I call it innocent, becauſe not of that kind which gives a ſhock to modeſty; proceeding rather from a natural gaiety of temper, unreſtrained by diſappointments. The friend I love bowed himſelf before this fair idol, and worſhipped her very foibles. I ſaw ſhe was not diſpleaſed with her votary, but that a capriciouſneſs of humour would make her a long time hold back the reward ſhe one day intended him.

The lovers parted; ſhe ſet out for the metropolis of Britain; he to attend a ſick parent. Every letter I received from the former, made me tremble for the latter,

whoſe

whoſe felicity I knew was irrecoverably in her keeping. I wrote, I expoſtulated; but to no purpoſe were my epiſtles and expoſtulations. Exaſperated at this unworthy uſage of my friend, I reſolved to diſcover if her angry indifference was real or affected; determined for the firſt to deſpiſe her heartily, for the laſt to puniſh her ſeverely. The affection with which I am honoured, got the better of my Harriot's ſcruples—ſhe conſented to whatever I propoſed, and I, in return, ſolemnly aſſured her, Olivia ſhould be ſpared the confuſion of having her lover either acceſſary to, or witneſs of, her trial. Indeed I half ſuſpected, had we let him into the ſecret, he would have been the firſt to fruſtrate our purpoſe; rather chooſing to ſuffer himſelf, than inflict a moment's pain on his beloved.

My account of your death was received as I expected—fits, tears, and a journey into Scotland, ſucceeded—her melancholy was fed by ſolitude, and might have been of ill conſequence, had we not uſed a thouſand little ſtratagems to divert it.

Harriot would have undeceived her as ſoon as ſhe came down; but it was my opinion, that if ſhe did not grieve unreaſonably, ſo as to injure her health, the longer ſhe mourned your ſuppoſed death, the deeper intereſt you would be making in her boſom. During this time, I had taken the Lord knows how much trouble to amuſe your doubts, and raiſe your hopes, without even telling you that your miſtreſs had left England. Nothing could be more *mal-a-propos* than your viſit—you came upon us unawares, and ſpoiled all we had begun.

All is now over! you ſay. Not over, Harry—

Harry—proſpects are a little clouded at preſent—they will not be eternally obſcure.

Suppoſe encamped near each other two mighty generals, Love and Pride: The latter is offended, and declares war againſt the former---numerous forces draw up on either ſide, whilſt their leaders engage in ſingle combat. Pride exhauſts his ſtrength in fighting againſt himſelf; Love acting only on the defenſive. In this ſituation are the two combatants, when in ſteps an experienced archer, aſſumes the form of Hatred, and offers to conquer the enemy, if Pride will give him the command, and come to a pitched battle. Cupid, for it is no other than that ſecond Proteus, by this ſtratagem obtains the victory. Love's adverſaries are driven from the field, and Pride taken captive.

In the breaſt of your adorable this battle will be fought---already has her Pride received the deſtructive profeſſions of his foe---Cupid has obtained command, and, under the likeneſs of Hatred, eſtabliſhed the empire of Love. I could ſtake my fortune, I could ſtake my very life, that all will yet end happily.

Where did you ſee the capricious girl? When did you ſee her? We heard nothing of your interview—you came---you went---you ſaw none of the family. How happened this ſtrange medley of accidents? I tire myſelf with aſking, I ſhall tire you with anſwering queſtions.

Tueſday evening Olivia returned from a walk rather later than is her uſual cuſtom---I never ſaw her more chearful---her chearfulneſs diſpleaſed me---I was chagrined---I began to fear ſhe had forgot you too haſtily.

Certainly

Certainly this was the time when you met--nor do I think her gaiety a bad omen, notwithſtanding her mad flight. Wedneſday ſhe left us, not a word of her intentions. On her dreſſing-table ſhe left the following billet.

"LET me entreat my dear brother "and ſiſter not to alarm themſelves at "my abrupt departure. Nothing is more "painful than taking leave of friends we "love---to wave this diſagreeable cere- "mony, I ſteal from them---the deſign I "had in viſiting Scotland, is more than "anſwered---the diſorder on my ſpirits is "removed---I no longer pine after ſoli- "tude---I return to the world with an "eclat inexpreſſible. Condemn me, chide "me, but do not hate me; there is a "ſtrange fatality attends your

"OLIVIA RUTLAND."

Return

Return to the world with an eclat inexpreſſible. She only pretends to be diſpleaſed---ſhe only flies to be purſued---chear up man---the prize is your's---a prize worth all the ſighs ſhe has, or will coſt you. In her very levity there is a certain agreeableneſs of humour, that pleaſes even in oppoſition to reaſon.

How delightful, after being long a ſlave, to be a conqueror---how delightful to vanquiſh a heart that ſeems invincible ---but how much more delightful, when a man can tell himſelf he deſerves to vanquiſh! Theſe ſatisfactions are in ſtore for Oſwall. Harriot loves you--we are united in every thing---partake our beſt wiſhes for the happineſs of our friend.

LETTER

LETTER XIX.

OLIVIA to Mrs. GREATON.

AGAIN talk to me of the world---again talk to me of plays, of routs, of aſſemblies, of the drawing-room: Talk to me of any thing but odious ſolitude---talk to me of any body but Sir Harry Oſwall. His ſpirit has appeared to me—at Eadon-heath he has appeared to me---his ſpirit has talked to me, has knelt to me, has kiſſed my hand. I uſed a ſacred ſpell that conjured it the Lord knows where, and here am I with Lady Bell Haſtings in St. James's Place, abſolutely run from it. I would not ſee it a ſecond time for the univerſe. I hate ſupernatural beings; unhappy themſelves, they

they come only to diſturb the tranquillity of others.

Whether I ſleep, whether I wake, whether all I have heard or ſeen, is real, or a viſion, I cannot at this moment aſcertain. Well, if it was a dream, I'll tell you how it happened.

Methought I was paſſionately fond of indulging privacy, and from this motive, that I might indulge with greater freedom the viſits of Contemplation, gloomy daughter of Melancholy, I one evening gave Sir Michael and my ſiſter the ſlip, deſigning to wile away an hour or two in the adjacent meadows. My boſom companion, who then attended in all my little excurſions, is of a ſlothful, indolent humour; ſhe oppoſed my intentions, and inſtead of ſuffering me to purſue my walk, pointed out a little ſolitary wood, where we might repoſe; and I having

long

long reſigned my will to her's, followed imperceptibly.

On the verge of this ſequeſtered retreat, and cloſe by the road-ſide, ſtands an arbour romantically inviting; thither methought I was led by Contemplation, who inſenſibly began a ſubject, of which ſhe was perfect miſtreſs, and would force it on me, though ſhe knew it infinitely diſtreſſed me. Having brought my mind into a fit cue for their reception, ſhe next introduced her parent Melancholy, and a whole train of attendant ideas. Oh! my dear, ſhe is a falſe friend, an incroacher, a thief that was very near ſtealing away my vivacity. I will no more liſten to her voice---I will no more receive her to my heart.

Oppreſſed by the magic influence of my malevolent companions, I raiſed a thouſand frightful images to torment me.

Complaints

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Whether I ſleep, whether I wake, whether all I have heard or ſeen, is real, or a viſion, I cannot at this moment aſcertain. Well, if it was a dream, I'll tell you how it happened.

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Complaints

Complaints of injured lovers, their ſighs, their expiring groans, aſſailed my ears; and drops of horror and remorſe trickled down my cheek, which, in the true Arcadian ſtile, was reſted on my lily hand.

Methought I was in this romantic receſs, and in this deſponding mood, when the form of Sir Harry Oſwall, pale and emaciated, ſtood before the entrance of my bower---his eyes were fixed upon me, not of a ſize enormous, or colour flaming, but full of paſſionate tenderneſs.

I ſcreamed---I trembled---I was near fainting---I fell down on my knees---I hid my face on the ſeat---I cried out, "Save "me, my God, ſave me!---he comes! he "comes! to upbraid me."

Here I was interrupted, the ſpectre kneeling, had thrown his arms about me- -"Who, my deareſt life---who, my

"adored

" adored Olivia, who will upbraid you?
" Can it be your Oſwall that has thus ter-
" rified you?"

Methought, at this inſtant, a gleam of penetration broke in upon my mind---I ſaw every thing inſtantaneouſly in its proper mode---and as inſtantaneouſly getting from my humble poſture, would have fled from him---if poſſible from myſelf---bluſhing at the weakneſs I had betrayed, and vexed to death at the impoſition practiſed on my too eaſy credulity. A long while I refuſed to anſwer his enquiries, when, with pretended tokens of ſurprize, he preſſed to know why I had ſhewn ſo much terror at his appearance. Finding myſelf forcibly detained, both hands being faſt locked in his, I ſummoned all the anger I inly felt to my countenance: "And can you think, Sir Harry," ſaid I, obliging him to quit his hold,

" this

" this mean, this very low contrivance " will ſucceed ?"

" For heaven's ſake, returned he, of " what mean, of what low contrivance " does Miſs Rutland accuſe me ? My pre- " ſence, Madam, at this juncture, was " not a concerted ſcheme---accident di- " rected me hither---I did not know you " was in Scotland. But I am the ſport of " Fortune---eternally unhappy--eternally " diſpleaſing the idol of my ſoul's affec- " tion."

There was in his words, in his air, ſomething that moved me exceedingly--- Love's laſt ſtruggle, I believe, nay, I am ſure it was, for ſince that time I have never felt a ſenſation like it.

I hope I ſhall be able in time to for- give Sir Michael and Lady Leſley---but for their third accomplice, he has no mer- cy to expect. And now let me tell you,

that

that I give a ſhrewd gueſs that Mrs. Grafton was not ſhut out from the artifice carrying on againſt her friend---Sir Harry was certainly in your thoughts when you ventured to prognoſticate I ſhould be happy. You talked too of a man who loved me to diſtraction---this man ſhould be Sir Harry---woe is his ſituation. *Beware of counterfeits* ſhall be my motto. No! no! if ever I am cheated again, it is my own fault. He would have me believe him innocent---a very ſhallow ſubterfuge ---I know he *muſt* be guilty---and as guilty he *ſhall* be treated.

I could tell you a deal more that paſſed in my viſion---as how he accuſed Fortune and excuſed himſelf—as how I, all thankfulneſs to Fortune, condemned only him---and a great many other as hows, but what ſignifies repetition.

Night was now beginning to hang out

her ſable mantle; I inſiſted on his leaving not only the arbour, but the village alſo, for as yet I was undetermined what courſe to take with his accomplices. I commanded in a tone ſo abſolute, as one who would be obeyed, that, ſubmiſſively kiſſing my hand, which, as a laſt favour, I could not refuſe him, he conſented to return immediately to North-hill, there to wait my further commands, without attempting to ſee either Sir Michael or Harriot. In truth, I did uſe a little art before I could bring him to theſe terms. I did ſay, "Perhaps time," and ſo forth---there was no harm in that, you know---if I have learned to deceive, pray who were my inſtructors? The wicked digged a pit to enſnare me, and are fallen into the midſt of it themſelves. Is it not ſo, Jenny? May I not ſay this with the ſtricteſt truth?

Having diſmiſſed Sir Harry, he mounted his horſe, which a ſervant was leading up and down the road, leaving his fair miſtreſs with a pace viſibly reluctant. Perhaps you think I followed him with my eyes---perhaps you ſuppoſe I ſhed a tear at parting? Why trouble me with your thoughts and ſuppoſitions? Aſk my ſiſter, aſk Sir Michael, if in my gayeſt days they ever ſaw me with a brighter countenance than I brought home that evening.

In my heart I was, and am ſtill very angry with them; yet I have always this command of my temper, that I can conceal my anger, or at leaſt ſuppreſs it, ſo as it ſhall never tranſport me to ſay any thing which I ſhould have occaſion to repent when my paſſion is over.

Reſolved to mortify them, and ſecure myſelf, the next morning, with only one

female attendant, I took a French leave, and late the third evening found myſelf in the arms of my Lady Bell Haſtings. Why are not you in England? I am inclined to quarrel with Mr. Grafton for robbing me of your preſence at a time when I ſtand more in need of it than ever. Yet fear nothing for my reſolution—love will never again neſtle in a heart, where the thorns of anger and reſentment are ſo thick planted. Not another word! In whom am I going to confide? Have I ſo ſoon forgot that you were in league with my enemies? Beſides, are you not married? I have ever held it exceeding dangerous to truſt my ſecrets with a good wife, or a good catholick; the one reveals to her huſband, the other to her confeſſor. Suffer me to ſend a thouſand civilities to Mr. Grafton. If ever I have a huſband, *you* ſhall be intitled to the ſame liberty.

LET-

LETTER XX.

Sir HARRY OSWALL to Sir M. LESLEY.

SHE is really ſafe you ſay; ſhe is with Lady Bell Haſtings. God, I thank thee. Oh, Leſley! ten days ſpent as I have ſpent them, who would live on ſuch terms! Mrs. Keith's letter which you ſent with friendly haſte, awakens me from a dream of horrible deſpair---my drooping ſoul revives. Miſs Rutland is ſafe---ſhe is under proper protection---I may ſee her again---there is even a poſſibility ſhe may yet be mine. But let me ſuppoſe the moſt dreaded of all ſuppoſitions: Paſſionately as I love her, I think my love is diſintereſted---I think I could forego my deareſt hopes to increaſe her

happineſs a ſingle grain---yes, I think I could reſign her to another---but then ſhe muſt love that other---ſhe muſt love him fervently! To what a romantic height of reſolution do I climb? My head grows giddy---I muſt deſcend--ſweet Hope, lend me thy ſupporting hand.

Leſley, if Fortune is my friend, I ſee your ſiſter on Friday. Late as it is, I leave Scotland this evening---this hour---this moment. Farewell.

LETTER

LETTER XXI.

Sir MICHAEL LESLEY to OLIVIA.

SISTER, you cannot be in earneſt; you cannot be really angry; if you are, let the ſtorm burſt over Eadon-heath, avert it from North-hill, I beſeech you.

Now has Olivia an opportunity of trying the intrinſic value of a heart all her own---uſe it tenderly---uſe it as a rare gem---not as a plaything, a bauble, which ſlipping through your fingers, you can replace with another of the kind at pleaſure. No! no! my dear fantaſtical girl, you will not meet a Sir Harry Oſwall in every fluttering butterfly, which your noon of beauty may have the power of attracting. Wit, virtue, goodneſs, gal-

lantry, tenderneſs, and fidelity, ſhew me where they are united but in him.

Siſter, deny it not; the beloved mirror, in which you contemplate your own graces, is not dearer to you than are the praiſes of Sir Harry Oſwall--conſult that mirror now, and it will tell you with a ſmile, and a dimple, that happineſs is in your reach; conſult it ten years hence, and it will tell you, with a frown and a wrinkle, that you have miſſed your opportunity. A thouſand times I will repeat, that you love Sir Harry Oſwall --your pallid cheek ---your tearful eye---your ſigh-fraught lips ---have they not confirmed it? You attempt to revenge a harmleſs little artifice with airs of reſentment, when in your heart you doat on our contrivance. The glory is all my own---Sir Harry was too much in love for a confederate---he had no hand in it upon my honour.

Confeſs,

Confeſs, for we know you have too much good ſenſe, too much generoſity, and too much ſomething elſe, to keep us longer in ſuſpenſe. Confeſs, my dear Olivia, with your uſual ingenuity, that you are not diſpleaſed---though, indeed, your affected reſentment was carried to great lengths. Leave us ſo abruptly! But we have all ſomething to be forgiven, except my friend, who is already with you, and I hope not unrewarded, for the many painful hours he has lately ſuffered.

A ſingle line of invitation on a certain occaſion, will bring my Harriot and her adoring lover to your embraces. *Adoring lover!* mark that, Olivia---ſix years after marriage---is not the ſound harmonious? Try how it will come from Sir Harry; I will engage, in this he ſhall be my echo.

The majeſtic tulip is excelled by the roſe only in fragrance---let the ſiſter of

my

my beloved reſemble her in tenderneſs, as much as ſhe does in every other excellence---tenderneſs is a fragrance, which will yield eternal ſweetneſs.

Bluſh not to own your heart the property of a deſerving man. Can there be a fervent affection for virtue, where there is not a lively, a paſſionate ſuſceptibility? No!---A beautiful object *may* charm the *eye*, but it *muſt* touch the heart to give exquiſite ſatisfaction.

Next to my Harriot, there is not a woman on earth dear to me as yourſelf. I approve every thing in the conduct of my wife---I diſapprove but of one thing in the conduct of my ſiſter.

Suppoſe me in the garden of a botaniſt; he ſhews me a vaſt collection of valuable plants, deſigned for the moſt ſalutary uſes—they are the admiration of connoiſſeurs—they gain him high eſteem

for

for the great judgement with which he has reared and maintained them; ſuppoſe I ſee a weed inſinuating itſelf amongſt theſe rare plants, which, though ſlowly creeping, muſt in time overſhadow, if not utterly deſtroy them; ſhall I be ſilent? or ſhall I point out this weed to the botaniſt, that ſeeing, might deſtroy it? Truſt me, dear Olivia, none but enemies flatter imperfections; a true friend points out where the weed lies, that you may root it up in ſeaſon. I am that friend—you the botaniſt—your mind the garden—your perfections the rare plants—your playfulneſs of heart, though not intentionally hurtful, is the ſlow, ſubtile weed, againſt which you are to guard. Do not think I mean your vivacity, your entertaining chearfulneſs is to be eradicated; theſe are flowers of the faireſt growth: What I call playfulneſs of heart,

to give it a term which in my conſcience I think too gentle, might be obſerved in that kind of playfulneſs which the miſchievous kitten uſes, when ſhe worries her captive mouſe, and teazes him to death. If I have any pardon to aſk for this ſimile, it is Sir Harry's. *Entre nous*, ſhould you wickedly, in a fit of reconciliation, tell him what I ſay, that I have dared to liken him to a mouſe, perhaps he may convince me, his tameneſs extends only to your Ladyſhip.

Jeſting apart, we impatiently expect your ſummons—you know on what occaſion. Adieu. We love you with affection unremitting--make yourſelf, make Sir Harry Oſwall happy, by one act of generoſity, nay, common juſtice---do this, and I am bound to you eternally.

LETTER

LETTER XXII.

Mrs. GRAFTON to OLIVIA.

INDEED, and indeed, I knew nothing of the contrivance plotting againſt you, till in a fit of deſperation and remorſe you left England---then I confeſs, your *enemies*, as you humorouſly call your beſt friends, did me the honour of letting me into a corner of their confidence; further, I declare myſelf ſo much enamoured with their charming ſtratagem, that could I have been in any manner aſſiſting, depend on it I had not ſtood neuter. Ah! Olivia, Olivia, you deſerve all—indeed you do—you ſee I ſet your anger at defiance---and why? Becauſe I know it is impoſſible for you to be angry in earneſt.

Your evening viſion alarmed me---I

to give it a term which in my conſcience I think too gentle, might be obſerved in that kind of playfulneſs which the miſchievous kitten uſes, when ſhe worries her captive mouſe, and teazes him to death. If I have any pardon to aſk for this ſimile, it is Sir Harry's. *Entre nous*, ſhould you wickedly, in a fit of reconciliation, tell him what I ſay, that I have dared to liken him to a mouſe, perhaps he may convince me, his tameneſs extends only to your Ladyſhip.

Jeſting apart, we impatiently expect your ſummons—you know on what occaſion. Adieu. We love you with affection unremitting--make yourſelf, make Sir Harry Oſwall happy, by one act of generoſity, nay, common juſtice---do this, and I am bound to you eternally.

LETTER

LETTER XXII.

Mrs. GRAFTON to OLIVIA.

INDEED, and indeed, I knew nothing of the contrivance plotting againſt you, till in a fit of deſperation and remorſe you left England---then I confeſs, your *enemies*, as you humorouſly call your beſt friends, did me the honour of letting me into a corner of their confidence; further, I declare myſelf ſo much enamoured with their charming ſtratagem, that could I have been in any manner aſſiſting, depend on it I had not ſtood neuter. Ah! Olivia, Olivia, you deſerve all—indeed you do—you ſee I ſet your anger at defiance---and why? Becauſe I know it is impoſſible for you to be angry in earneſt.

Your evening viſion alarmed me---I

trembled as I read---I felt all your ſurprize, and own it horrible---I read on, and every ſpark of pity vaniſhed. How could you treat with ſuch haughtineſs, with ſuch diſdain, the gentle ſpirit? You *uſed a ſecret ſpell that conjured it the Lord knows where.* Suppoſe it ſhould never haunt you more; truſt me, my dear, you would deſpiſe, deteſt and loathe your odious ſpell---and if it was a *ſpirit* of ſpirit---but I ſee how you frown, ſo will not ſay in that caſe what I ſhould expect from its reſentment. If it viſits you again, give it leave to love you as much as it pleaſes---to tell you ſo as often as it pleaſes---and repay with uſury thoſe favours you have too long ſuſpended.

Love quarrels produce ſweet reconciliations---ſo I have been told; theory is all I can ſpeak from---my good man I doubt will never give me an opportu-

nity

nity of ſpeaking practicably; very hard, no doubt to be debarred ſo charming a privilege. Indeed, he is a moſt unaccountable creature---I teaze him, I plague him a hundred times a day, but for my life cannot have the glory of conquering his natural humour. I go without ceremony to his cloſet when he is buſy---I prattle to him in ſuch a manner, as would put almoſt any other huſband out of patience. If he is ſerious, which happens but ſeldom, I try to vex him with my ſmiles---if he is gay, I overcome his gaiety with my own. And how think you my pains are rewarded? Not with a piſh, a poh, a pray be quiet, I am in no trifling humour, or any of theſe ingratiating ſentences---a look of unutterable affection, a tender embrace, my deareſt life, my angel, you are too obliging, is the *poor* return I meet with.

Well!

Well! but, Olivia, I have not yet done chiding. In the name of wonder, why did you leave Eadon-heath ſo precipitately? I hope by this time matters are accommodated---if not, poor Sir Harry! how I pity him.

What do you mean by threatening me with your confidence? Let me hear of no ſcheme in that little heart of your's, contrary to the intereſt of its lord---yet tell me all its agitations. I cannot be indifferent to any thing you are tranſacting, even though it ſhould be miſchief.

I find myſelf charmed with our deſtination. The firſt week was aukward enough; but now that I know faces and things, I have only to regret the abſence of my Engliſh friends. It is impoſſible to tell you what a profuſion of civilities we hourly receive. The Stadtholder is a graceful, and very affable prince; his court

court extremely ſplendid---amongſt the women ſome there are exceeding lovely, though in general not half ſo handſome as thoſe of our three kingdoms.

To-morrow I aſſiſt at a grand maſk-ball given by his Highneſs; my next ſhall bring you a full and true account of this entertainment. I ſhall alſo make many obſervations on a place and people, in whoſe favour I am beginning to think partially.

Mr. Grafton embraces my Olivia---he deſpatches a thouſand civilities more than ſhe ſent him---I claim your promiſe---nay, I command you, *huſband* or not *huſband*, to give on my account to Sir Harry Oſwall in proportion as you receive from Mr. Grafton.

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LETTER XXIII.

Sir HARRY OSWALL to Sir M. LESLEY.

LESLEY, my miſery is compleated!

LETTER XXIV.

OLIVIA to Lady LESLEY.

REALLY, Harriot, Sir Michael is ſo intolerably inſolent, that though I am bleſſed with a happy command over my temper, I have not quite enough to anſwer, with my uſual compoſure, his abuſive and moſt ſcandalous aſperſions.

Sir Harry Oſwall dear to me---I love him---inſulting wretch! he is your huſband, or I have friends to whom he ſhould be accountable for this ſhocking uſage. My God! I love Sir Harry Oſwall! his praiſes dear to me! Patience, heaven! Why am I thus cruelly aſperſed? Can it be, becauſe at the time of his ſuppoſed death---ah, ſiſter! ſiſter! I happened to have a diſorder on my ſpirits, and the change of air was thought neceſſary. Can it be from this? Had I known what conſtructions were to be faſtened on my viſit, neceſſary as it was, I had not troubled Sir Michael with my company,

Did he expect, that to ſhew my indifference for Sir Harry, I would dance and ſing over his grave? I, for my part, ſee no occaſion even at the death of an enemy for rejoicing. I did not regard him as an enemy, I had forgiven him ſo far,

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as to be ſorry for his loſs, as a friend to your family.

Your kind caution, Sir Michael, deſerves one of my beſt courteſies---you have as much of my gratitude as you deſerve, or can expect.

I put your very friendly advice into immediate execution, and juſt *verbatim* as you foretold, my mirror ſpoke, "Inchanting Olivia, it ſaid, happineſs is in "your reach." I had ſo high an opinion of your prophetic talent, that, fearing to *miſs my opportunity*, Brother, I ſeized the preſent moment---flew to Lady Bell's dreſſing-room---found there the moſt paſſionate of lovers, and with a ſmile and a dimple promiſed to make him happy. So you find, Sir, I have not *miſſed my opportunity*---the man to whom my heart, my very ſoul is united, ſhall guard my face from frowns, and as for wrinkles,

kles, they will come when they will come.

Adoring lover, after ſix years of matrimony, is a ſound, as you obſerve, truely harmonious---I die to hear how ſweetly it will ſound from Lord Edwin! A ſubject this, which never fails to harmonize my ſpirits---I feel its effects already---I am ſo pleaſed, ſo mild, ſo ſerene---again you are my own dear ſiſter---nay, I think I could pardon Sir Michael, on certain conditions---even his odious ſimile of the mouſe and kitten, I could forgive---but then he muſt never preſume to mention to Lady Edwin, as a lover, the man he has been ſo aſſiduous to faſten on Olivia Rutland. Yet, why this caution? Is not my brother's approved honour my ſecurity?

I know you will love---you will admire---you will reverence my choice.

Lord Edwin, I venture to pronounce, will do honour to the family from which he is deſcended. Need I ſay more? You are not unacquainted with the public and private character of his late excellent father.

On my firſt interview with this accompliſhed lover, I liked him very well---the ſecond extremely well---the third exquiſitely well---the fourth paſſionately well ---and the fifth---why, I thought him ſo inimitable, that I became even impatient to give him a hand which he courted with unfeigned ardour. Now, to tell you a piece of ſecret hiſtory, I was a great admirer of, and more than half in love with his Lordſhip, when you ſo unjuſtly accuſed me of partiality to another—that other has haunted me like a ſhadow, I mean to all places of public reſort—for as to admitting private viſits, they would

have

have been quite inconſiſtent with my notions of decorum.

Poor Sir Harry! upon my word, good people, you muſt forgive me if I laugh at the doleful creature. Can there be any thing in nature, more abſurd, more ridiculous, than dying for love? though if my knight of the ſorrowful countenance ſhould tip off, which his features ſtiffened with melancholy ſeem to threaten, his death I believe will come rather from the finger of diſappointment than the hand of Cupid. You know that vexatious finger has touched him pretty cloſe in a late affair. Alas, poor Yorick! ha, ha, ha, ha, ha! I find myſelf ſo much inclined to mirth, that I can by no means reſtrain its effuſions. Don't frown----I know your partiality for Sir Harry; I could not, indeed I could not prevent the emotion---it was quite involuntary---

upon my ſincerity it was. I myſelf pity and eſteem Sir Harry---to convince you I do not think him unworthy my notice, I'll tell you what I have done to make him eaſy.

No ſooner had I made Lord Edwin happy - (I uſe his Lordſhip's own words)— nay, I am inclined to think I have contributed to his happineſs, or perhaps I wiſh to believe every thing he tells me, and this he tells me fifty times a day. Infatuating ſubject! Well, what was I ſaying---Oh, to convince you that I have really compaſſion for Sir Harry Oſwall, no ſooner was the Gordian knot tied than I deſpatched the following laconic card, carefully ſealed, together with a letter unopened, which he had juſt ſent me.

" LADY Edwin's compliments to Sir " Harry Oſwall, as her Ladyſhip never " entertained any other ſentiments for

" him

" him than thoſe of friendſhip, and as
" ſhe has this morning diſpoſed both of
" her heart and hand, he cannot be ſur-
" prized, that honour forbids her to open
" any letters directed for Miſs Rutland.
" Lady Edwin wiſhes Sir Harry all poſ-
" ſible felicity."

Well! what ſay you now? was not this condeſcenſion? could I do more? have I not wrote in the tendereſt terms imaginable? Love, admire, doat on me for this, or you are the moſt ungrateful creature breathing---yes, ungrateful---- for had he not been your friend, I ſhould have expreſſed myſelf far otherwiſe.

I have not yet told you to what a paradiſe I am tranſported. O Harriot! ſuch fields—ſuch gardens—ſuch parks—ſuch groves—ſuch wilderneſſes—ſuch fountains—ſuch grottoes---ſuch birds---ſuch deer

deer---ſuch lambs---ſuch a menagerie for you---the catalogue has run me out of breath. Then for Lady Edwin, ſuch jewels---ſuch plate---ſuch ſilks---ſuch apartments---ſuch pictures---ſuch furniture---ſuch an equipage---and ſuch a huſband---am I not ſuperlatively happy?

Let me embrace you, my deareſt ſiſter, at his Lordſhip's ſeat, Ferrar-Grove, in the county of Kent---and, O exquiſite! no more than two hours drive from London. My Lord's horſes are as fleet as the wind, they ſhall whirl you to that inchanting place as often as you pleaſe.

Bring Sir Michael, bring my little adorables with you---indeed I muſt have both the ſweet loves this ſummer---I muſt and will have one of them with me perpetually----ſometimes Tommy, ſometimes Billy, as you can find in your heart to part with the pretty charmers.

Lady

Lady Bell honours me at Ferrar-Grove ---ſuch a companion can be no ſmall inducement to draw you hither.

I confeſs the ſtep I have taken, was rather ſudden---but you know I do every thing in a hurry---the opportunity was too agreeable to be ſlighted---beſides, Brother, if I had *miſſed my opportunity*, poh! piſh! I don't retort this with any degree of reſentment---I ſhall laugh a thouſand times at the expreſſion---all now is harmony. Well then, Sir Michael, you will come---do---and before we part, if you are not convinced, if you do not acknowledge I have choſen as wiſely for myſelf, as my friends would have done for me; if you do not ſee me as happy as your partiality for Sir Harry has made you often declare I might be with him; if you do not confeſs all this, I deſire to be caſt off as a diſgrace and diſhonour to your family.

O,

O, my good Lord! this is exceedingly obliging---well, do pray write what you think proper. My invitation, it ſeems, Harriot, is not half preſſing enough, his Lordſhip is determined to add a word or two of his own.

Lord EDWIN writes:

"THOUGH I have not the happineſs of a perſonal acquaintance with "Sir Michael and Lady Leſley, the perfection I every hour diſcover in their "amiable ſiſter, fills me with impatience "to be ranked in the number of their "friends; an honour this of which I am "truely ambitious. Lady Edwin, equally "impatient with myſelf, propoſes meeting you any part of the way from Scotland; or if it would be the leaſt inducement to your favouring our requeſt, we ſhould not heſitate making

"it

"it in perſon. I have the honour and
"happineſs of ſubſcribing myſelf,
"Your's, &c."

Enough, enough, my Lord; ſo now go you down and take a ſtroll with Lady Bell, I will finiſh my letter and follow---all obedience to be ſure. Well, Harriot! well, Brother! now what think you of Lord Edwin? Is he not a charming man? Does he not deſerve his good fortune? Can you forgive me now for veiling my intentions till all was over? But for Sir Harry Oſwall, I ſhould have had no concealment, or needed any apology—fear of my deſigns reaching his ear, fear that he would bluſter, perhaps prevent them, and a profuſion of other fears kept me ſilent. How, you know, could I truſt people, whoſe attachment to him had been ſo evidently evinced. Poor Sir Harry!

Harry! may you be happy with ſome fair one that can love you better, and is better beloved than Lady Edwin, who muſt and does eſteem herſelf the moſt fortunate of women. To what lengths am I running—you know my engagement—and you know it is my pride to be punctual.

LETTER XXV.

Lady OSWALL to Sir MICHAEL LESLEY.

SIR Michael! I am overwhelmed with concern—the darling of my fond affection, the comfort of my age, tells me he is miſerable, that he has loſt all hopes of your ſiſter. Alas! why did he not reveal his paſſion ſooner? I might have then aſſiſted him. Is it yet too late? Is there not a poſſibility that ſhe may yet regard him favourably? Plead for him---for God's ſake plead for him. His fortune may be an objection---it is much too ſmall for the acceptance of Miſs Rutland—let me add, for the merits of my ſon. But had I known the ſentiments of his heart ſome months ago, ſuppoſing no

other

other bar to have obſtructed his felicity, this I might eaſily have removed. Tenderneſs, filial duty, has blaſted his peace ---painful, heavy reflection---ſcarce can I ſupport it. Why did he not diſcover to me his paſſion for your ſiſter, before ſhe had utterly rejected him? Would to God he had done this! He feared I ſhould put myſelf to inconveniences—he feared, that to enlarge his fortune, I ſhould contract my own. Oh, my generous, my beloved ſon! how ſhall I reward thy goodneſs? Heaven only can reward it. Ah! Sir Michael, ah! Lady Leſley, plead for him—plead for my child. God forbid Miſs Rutland ſhould have diſpoſed of her heart to another, and my Harry may yet be happy.

Every bar of fortune I have it in my power, and greatly in my inclinations to remove. I am richer in worldly matters

than

than the world ſuſpects---but oh! if I loſe the prop, the pride, the comfort of my life, I ſhall be poorer than the pooreſt.

My darling loſt, before he knew his parents! I foſtered him in my boſom---on my knee he prattled out his infancy. A widow in the morning of my life---bereaved too of an only child—on the ſon of that ſon I laviſhed all my tenderneſs.

I parted with the beloved of my ſoul, that a fooliſh fondneſs might not deprive him of advantages, ſuch as he could not receive under the direction of a woman---his education finiſhed, he returned to my arms, with improvements exceeding my warm, my fond, my partial expectation. Still he had a fault. To correct this fault, or make it of no fatal conſequence to his future peace, has been my conſtant endeavour.

In the management of his childiſh pit-

tance, I perceived a diſregard, a contempt for money---he was profuſe in his own little expences—he laviſhed pecuniary favours on his companions---yet neither his own, nor the intereſt of his friend, was conſidered, when the wretched countenance, or humble voice of miſery, implored his pity. His compaſſion, his benevolence charmed me—I cheriſhed both, and put it often in his power to indulge them. As he grew to riper years, thoſe virtues abated nothing of their fervour, yet they were attended by a turn of temper which I foreſaw might lead him into many inconveniences: Always upon my guard, I was but little diſturbed at an appearance which I had long expected, and which I had taken methods to make leſs pernicious, than it might otherwiſe have been. I ſecreted my fortune, I lived on my jointure, which is no

more than ſix hundred *per annum*, and perſuaded Harry this, with about half the income, which would be his in right of his father, was all he ever could inherit. I reſolved not to undeceive him till he ſhould think it for his happineſs to make ſerious propoſals to ſome lady of character and family. How did I pleaſe myſelf with this flattering expectation? how congratulate myſelf on my prudent precaution, when, by the means he uſed to raiſe money on his eſtates, the bent of his inclinations was confirmed?

Extravagance, or, to give it a gentler appellation, Liberality, was his only foible; vice I will not call it, as it tended to no vicious purpoſe. In this deception he has now gone on two-and-twenty years ---I have ſupplied him perpetually with large ſums, whilſt he, unconſcious of my knowing any thing of the matter, has

believed himſelf continually involving his little fortune.

His paſſions are too lively to love at a common rate---he ſaw your ſiſter---he loved her fervently, yet, through motives of filial tenderneſs, concealed his love from the only perſon, who could enable him to reveal it on terms not very diſadvantageous to the beloved object. Never did he reveal his ſituation to me, till following Miſs Rutland into England, from thence he diſcloſed it---he had attempted to viſit her---ſhe had refuſed his viſits, and he writes in abſolute deſpair.

If thirty thouſand pounds are not ſufficient to authorize his pretenſions, I will relinquiſh my jointure---a ſixth part is enough for my uſe---abundantly enough. I would remove to any ſmall cottage, where, if I could hear often from my children, if I could ſometimes em-

brace them, if I could be told from the lips of my beloved that he was happy, I ſhould not envy the monarch on his throne. My ſun would ſet ſerenely. I ſhould leave the world without regret ---I ſhould leave it bleſſing Providence--- bleſſing your Olivia.

It is not fortune---it cannot be fortune for which he is rejected. The ſiſter of Lady Leſley cannot have a narrow heart —Miſs Rutland cannot be mercenary--- I mention my circumſtances, not as inducement, but as a truth proper to be revealed. Should I be thus anxious to call a ſordid, ſelfiſh wretch, daughter?--- No, Sir! no, Madam! highly as I rate my ſon's felicity, I would not conſent to ſuch a union, though on it he imagined it depended. Vain imagination! what is love without the virtues to ſupport it?

Miſs Rutland is too amiable for the

peace of Harry—for my peace, unleſs ſhe honours him with ſome ſhare in her affections. He tells me her heart is hardened only to him; perhaps the pleadings of a poor, afflicted parent, tottering on the brink of eternity, may awaken her compaſſion. I never can kneel to any but my God, or I would kneel to her----I would not quit that humble poſture, till ſhe had bid me call her my child, my daughter, my Olivia. If it is his perſon ſhe diſapproves; let her regard him once more with attention---ſurely my Harry has nothing in his figure, nothing in his manly countenance, that is diſpleaſing. If it is his ſenſe ſhe diſapproves, when he talks; let her liſten without partiality. If it is the goodneſs of his heart ſhe diſputes; let her ſuppoſe ſhe has ſeen him as I have ſeen him, wearing out thoſe hours in watching over a ſick parent, which other young

men,

men, deaf to the voice of nature and humanity, paſs in diſſipation: Let her ſuppoſe ſhe ſees him pale with fatigue, and diſordered with anxiety: Let her ſuppoſe him tenderly officious, comforting, ſupporting, reverencing that drooping parent; he breathes nothing but duty---from her furrowed cheek he wipes away the tear of anguiſh---he preſſes her ſhrivelled hand to his lips---he lifts up his eyes in fervent prayer to heaven. Oh, Sir Michael! can the goodneſs of ſuch a heart be diſputed?

I fear the conflicts of his mind may have been pernicious to his health---twelve days are elapſed in ſilence---or perhaps---let me indulge the pleaſing ſuppoſition---perhaps Miſs Rutland does not regard him with averſion---perhaps ſhe condeſcends to requite his paſſion; if ſo, why ſhould I wonder at his ſilence?

Time appears tedious only to the unhappy.

Ever ſince I knew my ſon's ſituation, this letter has employed my moments---I am extremely weak---I am old---I am feeble---the pen has often dropped from my fingers through my inability of retaining it. I embrace you, Sir, I embrace Lady Leſley with reſpectful tenderneſs---Ah! that their amiable ſiſter would ſuffer me to embrace her with maternal affection.

LETTER XXVI.

Sir MICHAEL LESLEY to Lady OSWALL.

OLIVIA is unworthy the honour your Ladyſhip would confer upon her ---unworthy the attachment of my friend ---unworthy the tender affection of her ſiſter. My regard ſhe has forfeited---ſhe has forfeited all pretenſions to that ingenuous frankneſs for which ſhe was once diſtinguiſhed. Your ſon ſhe loved, by heaven; though ſhe denies it now, ſhe did love him. I rejoiced in the opening felicity of two people next my Harriot, and the pledges of our love, dearer to my ſoul, than any earthly treaſure. She flattered my hopes---ſhe flattered the hopes of my friend---ſhe deceives us both---ſhe

gives

gives her hand to another--another whom ſhe can have known but a few weeks. Yes, Madam, ſhe is really the wife of Lord Edwin.

This young nobleman, juſt come from abroad, is probably ignorant that her affections have been, perhaps were at the very time ſhe gave him her hand, the property of Sir Harry. I know they were---I know it was caprice, not love, which made her take a ſtep ſo unaccountable. She is now gaily dreaming---when awakened by reflection, how greatly will ſhe ſuffer, tormented by compunction and remorſe? I revere your Ladyſhip--I love your ſon---I condemn Lady Edwin: Yet whilſt I bluſh for her faulty conduct, her inconſiderate raſhneſs, I cannot forget ſhe is the ſiſter of the woman I adore. If I ſhould endeavour to forget it, would not the fears of my Harriot

be

be a perpetual remembrancer? I ſaid Olivia had forfeited her ſiſter's affection, my regard; but I ſaid it in the height of paſſion---I ſaid it when your Ladyſhip's condeſcending and incomparable letter ſhowed the greatneſs of her loſs in a huſband and a mother. Indeed I find it impoſſible to throw off the giddy, unthinking creature. My friend can be diſappointed only for a ſeaſon---abſence, or a more ſucceſsful attachment, muſt be his cure: But for Olivia, where will end her diſappointment?

Lord Edwin's character I am told is unexceptionable---it may be ſo---but I cannot love him. Why did he come to England? He ſends us a preſſing invitation to his houſe---he even offers to bring his lady over to attend us from Scotland. Let them ſtay where they are---I wiſh not to ſee either. How I contradict myſelf!

one

one moment I forgive---another I am full of reſentment. My mind I confeſs is unſettled---I know not what to do. Family animoſities are painful---they will afflict my Harriot, and her peace is ſuperior to any other conſideration. If I ſhould ſubſcribe to terms of reconciliation, could you blame me, Madam? No! I am convinced you would not.

Whatever are our future determinations, we have hitherto declined my Lord's invitation. I have anſwered his letter with diſtant civility only; but that which accompanied, or rather conveyed to us, has been taken no notice of either by Lady Leſley or myſelf---need I tell your Ladyſhip the neglected epiſtle is Olivia's? She wants not ſenſibility---ſhe will feel the contempt with which it has been treated. How ſlight a puniſhment for folly and deceit like her's! I will think of

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this ſubject no more---I cannot do it with the leaſt degree of temper. Your ſon, Madam, is well---I was honoured with a letter yeſterday---he tells me, that already he has acquired one degree, reſignation, and doubts not to find the ſame healing balm from time, as a thouſand others have experienced. He is gone to the ſeat of Lord Almeſton. In this ſedentary family the affairs of the world are never known, conſequently never canvaſſed; he is ſure the painful ſubject will be here excluded, which he cannot yet liſten to with compoſure. Why am I ſo particular? his heart, ever dutiful, forgets not to pour out its effuſions to a parent deſervedly the object of his fond reverence, and but from admirable motives alſo of his unbounded confidence: Theſe motives no longer ſubſiſt----he lays his whole ſoul open before you---he would have flown

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to

to your Ladyſhip's conſolatory embraces on the deciſion of his fate, but thought it more prudent to detach himſelf from your ſight a few weeks, rather than appear at North-hill overwhelmed with dejection, a dejection which it would have been impoſſible for him to keep from your obſervation. Excellent young man! Ah, Madam, what a treaſure do you poſſeſs in each other! I can now have no pretenſions to the honour of your Ladyſhip's alliance; yet permit me a ſhare in your eſteem---let me aſk it too for the perſon who ſhares with me in every thing—Harriot joins my ſolicitations warmly. We kiſs your Ladyſhip's hands with all veneration and reſpect.

LETTER

LETTER XXVII.

OLIVIA to Lady LESLEY.

CRUEL Lady Leſley! your unſiſterly neglect forbids a more tender appellation—not a line, a word, a ſyllable—not even my name mentioned in a few formal lines of apology, which Lord Edwin receives from Sir Michael. Barbarous uſage! Is my Harriot's heart hardened againſt her Olivia? and is all our former affection buried in oblivion?

You think me faulty—alas! if I have erred, my error has been innocent. In my connection with Lord Edwin, have I done any thing contrary to my honour, my intereſt, or my inclinations? No. Well then, how have I offended? Why, becauſe

I was

I was not tamely *cheated* into a marriage with Sir Harry Oſwall. I do not mention the man with diſeſteem—I believe him deſerving---I believe he merits a wife every way my ſuperior. What, in my preſent ſituation, can I ſay more? Indeed you condemn, you hate, you deſpiſe me without reaſon.

O Harriot! I could tell you ſuch things ---but you are paſt feeling compaſſion, on my account; as for Sir Michael, he would laugh, he would be pleaſed with the diſcovery---let me then be ſilent---I cannot be ſilent neither---you are my ſiſter---he is my friend---both are intitled to my confidence---ſay not you utterly diſclaim me.

Do you think me happy? perhaps you are miſtaken. O! for the world whiſper not to Sir Harry Oſwall, that another is the object of Lord Edwin's love. I ſhould die if he ſuppoſed it---yet I know it---I perceive

perceive it---every moment makes it more evident. Me he regards with friendſhip ---he regards me not with paſſion. The woman on whom he doats, on whoſe face his eyes are for ever riveted, diſcovers more than indifference. I do not ſee this through the opticks of jealouſy---it wants not that magnifier of lover's actions to make my ſituation viſible.

I ſaid Lady Bell was at Ferrar-Grove. Pity me! come to me! Lady Bell is not the perſon in whoſe preſence I ſhould moſt rejoice---need I ſay more? Her ladyſhip pretends great concern that you delay your viſit---ſhe ſees my chagrin, knows my impatience, and officiouſly offers to mediate between us. She will certainly write---how can I prevent it? Pray, my ever dear Siſter and Brother, let me find you propitious without her interpoſition. Tell your Olivia you

had conſented to her requeſt before the ſeal of Lady Bell's letter was broken---tell me this---tell it me in perſon---tell it me at Ferrar-Grove---and, for heaven's ſake, tell it me ſpeedily.

LETTER XXVIII.

Lady BELL to Lady LESLEY.

PERMIT me, Madam, in the name of Lady Edwin, to approach your Ladyſhip, full of eſteem and reſpect, to tell you how much it pains my heart that the friend I love ſtill pines under your and Sir Michael's diſpleaſure.

There is not a material incident in the life of your ſiſter, with which I am unacquainted. I would have perſuaded her from a late precipitate reſolution---in vain were my remonſtrances---a certain paſſion was too predominant, and appearances I confeſs are greatly in her disfavour---but when you know all---when you ſee the object of her choice, you will not think her ſo very culpable.

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I was no ſtranger to Lord Edwin's viſits---I knew her intentions---I ſhould have given you a peep into the affair, but ſhe proteſted on my ſecrecy depended her friendſhip; ſo valuably eſſential in my opinion, that prevailed upon by the fear of loſing it, I even became one of her party.

Prejudiced as your Ladyſhip and Sir Michael muſt be againſt Lord Edwin, that prejudice I know will one day ſubſide, and you will joyfully pardon your dear capricious ſiſter. If Lady Edwin has the ſentiments I believe her to have, ſhe entertains a proper conception of her felicity, which is exquiſite, and promiſes to be laſting.

I cannot tell your Ladyſhip half the amiable qualities of her huſband---yet Olivia ſighs often---perhaps---I dare not hint my ſuſpicions---let us ſuppoſe ſhe

ſighs

ſighs for your preſence---it is moſt certain that ſhe does ſigh, that ſhe does languiſh---yet a thouſand times ſhe aſſures me repentance has no ſhare in her uneaſineſs. For her ſake, for my ſake, for Lord Edwin's ſake, come to Ferrar-Grove ---the myſtery will then explain itſelf.

It is impoſſible your Ladyſhip ſhould ſuſpect me of partiality, when I declare Lord Edwin is perfectly amiable; I cannot tell you how very, very amiable. His Lady and I are never aſunder---we have but one heart, one ſoul. My lord honours me with his eſteem---we have the warmeſt ſentiments of friendſhip for each other. Adieu, Madam; adieu, Sir Michael. We live in the happy expectation of embracing you.

LETTER XXIX.

Sir M. LESLEY to Sir HARRY OSWALL.

SUSPECT me not of unſteadineſs, that, next to yourſelf, I rank Lord Edwin in my friendſhip. Be not offended that I write from Ferrar Grove; or diſpleaſed that I am reconciled to Olivia.

A letter, with one from Lady Bell, filled us full of apprehenſion for the peace of a ſiſter ſtill dear to our affection—ſhe entreated our preſence—my angel pleaded in her favour—with the tongue of ſeraphs did ſhe plead---my boys, hanging on the neck of their blooming mother, ſaw the drops of dew-eyed pity trickle down her cheeks, and caught the ſweet infection—to me ſhe ſent the weeping, ſmiling

ſmiling ambaſſadors—on my knee I gave them audience—they demanded pardon and protection for their aunt. Can you hate me, Oſwall, for ſending them away ſatisfied? Our journey was not to be delayed---that very morning the happieſt huſband and the lovelieſt wife in Europe, their two cherub children placed before them, ſlipped into a chaiſe, and with four excellent horſes flew towards the ſeat of Lord Edwin.

What was our ſurpriſe to find all there exulting in happineſs, which we were made to believe was beginning to ſuffer interruption! A mere contrivance of Lord and Lady Edwin to get us in their power. I could ſay nothing---Harriot could ſay nothing, for you know we *too* have been contrivers. For your ſake, for our ſake, I might ſtill wiſh that con-

trivance had ſucceeded; but for Olivia's ſake I know not what to ſay: With you ſhe would have been exquiſitely happy, with the perſon ſhe has made choice of ſhe will not be leſs happy.

Harry! you muſt ſee Lord Edwin---you muſt love him too---by heaven you muſt! I am ſerious---I ſhall hear from your own lips that you are not diſpleaſed with Olivia's huſband.

Though I ſpeak warmly of Lord Edwin, think not I forget my Oſwall. When we meet, I have ſomething to propoſe, which muſt convince him how near his intereſt is to my ſoul. Olivia is more your friend than either you or I ſuſpected ---it is her you are to thank for a ſcheme to leſſen the diſappointment you have ſuffered on her account. You muſt abſolutely come to us---no excuſe will be

accepted. I am not permitted to ſay more till I ſee you.

Lady Edwin is prepared to receive you with eſteem. Preference to her lord before all the men on earth, not a particular diſlike to you, has made her take a ſtep, which, when you ſee them together, you will ceaſe to condemn--you will think with me, that they were formed by heaven for each other. Dear Oſwall, what is paſt is paſt---look forward---determine to be happy---favour us with your preſence, and ſuffer your friends at the Grove to lend you their aſſiſtance. Lord Edwin has a heart above ſuſpicion; truſting to your honour, confiding in the prudence of his wife, he commands her to love you as a brother, he entreats you to love her as a ſiſter. I have ventured to guaranty, that neither of you will tranſgreſs theſe bounds.

Make

Make haſte, Harry, to complete the ſatisfaction of this family, particularly that of your ever faithful

LESLEY.

LETTER

LETTER XXX.

Sir HARRY OSWALL to Sir M. LESLEY.

YOURS is a mottled letter, Sir Michael! I know not how to conſtrue it---before I am recovered from one ſurpriſe, you plunge me into another.

Why profeſs a friendſhip for Oſwall, yet inſult him in the very moment of thoſe profeſſions? Love Lady Edwin! love the woman I have doated on to diſtraction! love her as a ſiſter! It ſeems, Sir, long as our acquaintance has been, we are yet ſtrangers to each other; or how could Leſley ſo much miſtake my temper? How could I ſo much miſtake his principles? What would you propoſe? what ſcheme has Lady Edwin pre-

me-

meditated? Something it muſt be to make me forget what ſhe once was, what I now am, or how can it leſſen the torments I ſuſtain?

Preference to her lord---ſee them together---formed for each other---determined to be happy--come to Ferrar-Grove---Lord Edwin generous---Lord Edwin not ſuſpicious--- Good God! what words are theſe? Are they not your own, Leſley? Is it thus you comfort your friend? I repeat, we have both been miſtaken! Continue to careſs Lord Edwin; think no more of Oſwall.

I will pray for the happineſs of your ſiſter---yet hear me, Sir Michael, the oppoſite poles ſhall meet before I go to Ferrar-Grove---for a principality I would not ſee Lady Edwin. *Love her as a ſiſter!* Heaven and earth! your cruel hand has

torn

torn open my wounds afreſh. Leſley! I pardon you, but do not again put my friendſhip to ſo ſevere a teſt. Farewell.

LETTER

LETTER XXXI.

Lady LESLEY to Sir HARRY OSWALL.

INDEED, Sir Harry, indeed you muſt come---you have refuſed Sir Michael, let me have the glory of preſenting you at Ferrar-Grove. Why did you ſuſpect my Leſley? Why did you write ſo unkindly? He is not more ſincerely attached to his wife than to his friend. Suffer me to lead you to his embraces. As the ſiſter of Lady Edwin I have no title to your compliance---but as the wife of your tender, affectionate Leſley, I have reaſon to expect it. Do not mortify me with a refuſal.

LETTER

LETTER XXXII.

Sir HARRY OSWALL to Lady LESLEY.

O Lady Leſley, moſt amiable of women! why have you commanded the only thing on earth which it is not in my power to obey? Neither reſentment, nor a perverſe humour, prevents me from the honour of kiſſing your Ladyſhip's hands---ſuch bars my reſpect for Lady Leſley ſhould have ſurmounted; but if I know my own ſoul, it is quite unconſcious for either. Suffer me to tell you, Madam, what it is that obliges me to this diſobedience: My heart is refractory---it will not ſubmit---it will not give up the object it has once loved. If I ſee Lady Edwin, that honour is endangered which

I have hitherto preſerved unblemiſhed---I know the precipice on which I ſtand---let not my friends lure me to deſtruction.

The moment I can regard Olivia with the cool eſteem from which it would be now highly criminal to deviate, that moment will I fly to Ferrar-Grove, and will as warmly aſk the friendſhip of Lord Edwin, and his family, as they now ſolicit mine. Till then I am, with gratitude and reſpect,

Your Ladyſhip's
moſt devoted, &c. &c.

LETTER

LETTER XXXIII.

Lady BELL to Sir HARRY OSWALL.

IF Lady Edwin had ever the leaſt influence over Sir Harry Oſwall, let him not reject the requeſt which ſhe ſends by my pen.

We are almoſt ſtrangers to each other ---once we did meet at Lord Longſdale's ---but what of that?---perhaps Lady Bell Haſtings paſſed unnoticed, or if obſerved, may ere this be forgot. Firſt prepoſſeſſions do not make the ſame deep impreſſions on every mind. I am going too far! pardon me, Sir Harry, I am all confuſion thus to have deviated from my ſubject. Lady Edwin declares ſhe ſhall not enjoy a moment's happineſs till ſhe has

completed your's; yet *one* there is, to whom your felicity is ſtill dearer. Have I ſaid too much?---more I dare not ſay.

Sir Michael Leſley is extremely, dangerouſly ill---he calls upon you inceſſantly. Can you hear this, Sir Harry, and yet determine to avoid us? Lady Edwin begs, prays, entreats you will ſet out immediately. The occaſion that requires your preſence is urgent---it cannot be diſpenſed with.

Baniſh your apprehenſions of meeting Lady Edwin---ſhe honours your diſcretion---ſhe is as much determined as yourſelf to avoid an interview, till aſſured you can ſee her without emotion---till you can ſee her only as the property of a huſband ſhe adores.

Have you ſtill any objections? If it is the preſence of a man who has ſtepped between you and your felicity; of a man,

who though he declares himſelf a friend, you fly as an enemy. If Lord Edwin's preſence is an objection, let that too be laid aſide—he will not attempt, but at your own requeſt, to give the friendly welcome his heart has long been preparing for you. Further, you ſhall not, if you deſire it, ſee a ſingle creature in the family but Sir Michael Leſley—him you muſt ſee—the fate of more than one depends upon your compliance.

If you diſcover any thing in my conduct that needs an apology, make it to yourſelf—my motives will not be always impenetrable. Do you acquit me, and I have nothing to fear from the reflections of any other perſon.

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LETTER XXXIV.

OLIVIA to Mrs. GRAFTON.

MY brother is come! my ſiſter is come! Sir Harry Oſwall is coming! —Where ſhall I begin next? Sir Harry Oſwall, I tell you, is coming. The audience meets—the play begins—a comedy of one act is ſoon over, and down drops the curtain. Pity ſo charming a performance cannot laſt for ever. Here, take the pen, Lady Bell—I can poſitively write no more—there, ſit you down—begin where I made Lord Edwin happy.

Lady BELL writes:

"As Lady Bell ſays it, and as I have "no reaſon to fear the contrary, let it "paſs

"paſs that ſhe did make Lord Edwin
"happy, when ſhe preſented him the
"hand of her unworthy friend."

OLIVIA writes:

Poh! that won't do—give me the pen again—I hate to have my friends abuſed—beſides, what is this preamble to my affairs?

Well, Jenny! you remember I told you Lady Bell's lover was arrived, fully poſſeſſed of his miſtreſs's good opinion; a treaſure Lady Stenton took great pains to deprive him of—piſh! nothing this to my purpoſe. To the purpoſe then of purpoſes. No ſooner did I fix my eyes on Lord Edwin, than I made it the teſt of Lady Bell's friendſhip, that ſhe ſhould reſign him to my abſolute command---ſhe did reſign him---but not without many expoſtulations on the cruelty and hard-

neſs of my heart, and as many entreaties that I would lay aſide my barbarous deſign. Now mark the force of juſtice: When I told Lord Edwin my ſad ſtory, he confeſſed my oppreſſors deſerved puniſhment---that is, he ſaid---I will not tell you exactly his own words, how do I know but you may miſconſtrue them?

Certain preliminaries ſettled, one of which was that I ſhould ſhew clemency at the laſt, I made them my firm and faſt allies. In conſideration of this friendly compact, his Lordſhip's viſits were conducted ſo circumſpectly, that the moſt diſcerning and inquiſitive had no room for ſuſpicion---with equal privacy the wedding was performed, in my Lord's houſe, and by my Lord's chaplain—no one preſent at the ceremony, but myſelf and her Ladyſhip's woman.

After

After preſenting a very amiable bride to a very amiable huſband, we ſet out for Ferrar-Grove---all rapture they---all ſelf-approbation I. How could I be otherwiſe than ſelf-approved, the inimitable caution obſerved, making a diſcovery of my further intentions next to impoſſible? But I ſhould have told you, that immediately as I came from giving Lady Bell Haſtings to Lord Edwin, I took the liberty of uſing her Ladyſhip's name, and in the prettieſt equivocal terms imaginable, diſpatched a card to Sir Harry Oſwall. A copy of this memorable card, and alſo of many letters that have paſſed occaſionally, I ſend incloſed, to ſave myſelf the expence of moments, at a ſeaſon when they are really beginning to grow precious. To-morrow---to-morrow---and every ſucceeding to-morrow, old Time will not appear to have one tedious, uſeleſs

minute, in his whole train, and not many days ſince I could have lopped off a very ſuperfluous quantity. LadyEdwin! where are you, Lady Edwin?---Gone as I live ---and here am I all alone with the idea of Sir Harry Oſwall. Good, ſweet idea, do not interrupt my narrative---it will not go and leave no trace behind. However, it lies in a ſnug corner of my boſom, promiſes to be very good, and very manageable, and ſuffers me to purſue my ſtory.

When I diſcovered my pretended marriage, all was fire and ſmoke, and war declared againſt me at Eadon-heath. The ingenious boy, who collects a heap of ſtubble, ſets it in a blaze, and, laughing in his ſleeve, ſtands aloof to hear how it cracks and bounces, is no bad emblem of my ſituation: Delighted at the flame I had kindled, my pleaſure was exquiſite,

till,

till, beginning to tire of the ſport, I endeavoured to ſtop its rapidity.

Examine carefully my letters to Sir Michael and Lady Leſley, before I could get them to the Grove. Obſerve my pretended inſinuations of jealouſy---obſerve how ſtrongly Lady Bell's letter enforces that inſinuation.

I defy the ſtricteſt ſcrutinizer to find a ſingle impropriety, whether they conſider me writing of Lady Edwin or myſelf. Read again and again---again examine---again re-examine; then tell me which has greater merit in the ingenious ſchool of contrivances, the teachers or the ſcholar?

Beyond my hopes, the ſcheme of jealouſy ſucceeded. The good ſouls were alarmed for their poor deluded, poor betrayed Olivia. Sir Michael, ever within call of compaſſion, heard her voice, and

in

in his haſte to obey the ſummons, dropped a heavy load of reſentment, which he carried in remembrance of the *faux pas* I had played his friend: Thus lightened and placed in the fairy chariot of expedition, Harriot by his ſide, away they flew; and down dropped the pair of comforters at Ferrar-Grove, even before buſy Expectation had been looking out for their approach.

I was arranging a curious collection of ſhells in the cabinet of Lady Edwin, when a Mercury with notice of their arrival ſet my heart in motion, my face in a glow, my ſpirits in a flutter. I might not have felt *all this* agitation at the bare thought of ſeeing my brother and ſiſter, but ah! of what, and of whom were they the harbingers? Of love, of matrimony, of Sir Harry Oſwall.

Lord

Lord and Lady Edwin were ſtrolling in the garden; I rejoiced at their abſence, and gave orders they ſhould not be informed viſitors were at hand. I tried to compoſe my countenance, reſolving to engage their admiration as Lady Edwin, before I beſpoke their affections as Olivia Rutland. A heroine of importance in the drama, ſhould avoid making her exit too haſtily. With an air of the moſt eager impatience, I took my poſt at a window commanding the road; a chaiſe-and-four ſoon appeared—pit-a-pat, pit-a-pat went the little monarch of my boſom---I ſunk down on a chair, and really thought I ſhould have fainted. If you laugh at my folly, I have done the ſame---ſurpriſe made me a fool---a moment's recollection reſtored me to reaſon, and when the ſervant announced them at the door, I roſe and ſtalked forward with all the dignity

and

and compoſure of a queen in tragedy. Harriot ran to my arms, I received her with ſome degree of that affection my heart felt, but ſuppreſſing as much of it as I poſſibly could, the embrace I gave was blended with a ſort of politeneſs which ſeemed to ſay, "Sifter, there is a "great difference in our ſituations." She, all artleſs, all unſuſpecting, ſaw nothing of this ſilent expreſſion. Sir Michael underſtood it perfectly---he approached me with an air of noble haughtineſs, ſuch as ſpoke more of pity than diſdain: "I ſalute "your Ladyſhip," ſaid he, coolly touching my cheek with his lips; "as Lady "Edwin I ſalute you, Madam."

"You do me too much honour, Brother "—but who have we here?" finding both my hands ſeiſed, "O, my ſweet dear loves! "is it you, my angels? my Tommy, my "Billy!" and whilſt each clung about my neck

neck as I ſtooped to receive their careſſes, I forgot my aſſumed character---away flew all reſerve, all ſuperiority. Sir Michael began to look upon me with his uſual complacency, Lady Leſley's eyes gliſtened, and mine abſolutely ran over. I tore myſelf from the prattling charmers, I threw my arms around my Harriot, I embraced her good man, and indulged my fondneſs for them all without reſtraint. "O Oſwall! you have indeed "loſt a treaſure!" Theſe obliging words I caught juſt as they eſcaped the lips of my Brother—opportunely enough, or I might have diſcovered myſelf, before they were properly prepared. "Spare me, "dear Sir, I replied, do not upbraid me— "the friend whom you love, Sir Harry Oſ- "wall, may yet be happy---more ſo per- "haps than if he had never ſuffered---I "hope, I believe he will." Moſt ſincerely did

did I ſay this; for if he does not feel greater joy in the moment of reconciliation, than would counterpoiſe an age of ſorrow, I don't know but I might think him ſtupid, and hate him in good earneſt. As neither Sir Michael or his Harriot could ſay any thing in favour of my conduct, their replies were very conciſe, ſuch as, it was in vain now to reflect—what was paſt could not be recalled—and ſo forth. The latter, to avoid a ſubject which ſhe ſuppoſed would diſtreſs me, left her ſeat, went to the window, and began to obſerve how extremely pleaſant my Lord's houſe was ſituated; paying me ſeveral pretty compliments on the excellent taſte his Lordſhip had diſcovered in the diſpoſition of his park and garden. I anſwered with a deep ſigh, that her obſervations were juſt; and then with a voice all dejection, aſked if they were inclined to take

a nearer

a nearer view of the gardens. Sir Michael, for the firſt time, now enquired after Lord Edwin. "Gone out, I ſaid, as "is his cuſtom moſt evenings." "Alone?" was the next queſtion. "No, with Lady "Bell." Again I ſighed ten times more audibly than before. Tears filled the fair eyes of my ſiſter—ſhe turned away her head—the good ſoul thought me ſlighted, and by ſuppoſing what ſhe ſhould have ſuffered under ſo dreadful a misfortune, felt in reality my inimitably-well counterfeited diſtreſs.

Having refreſhed my little darlings with cake and wine, I led them all into the garden—Lady Leſley, like the faireſt morning in June, ſweetly ſerene—I, like the noon of an April day, now gaily ſmiling, now over-clouded. I was not ſo poor a player as to forget the part I had aſſumed. Thus we walked on either

ſide

ſide of Sir Michael—Tommy and Billy freſh, fair, and blooming, emblems of ſpring in a double light, of its youth and of its innocence, marching on before us hand in hand.

I knew the favourite receſs of Lord and Lady Edwin, and ſeemingly without deſign led towards it—this was a little alcove which ſtands in the midſt of an aviary, where ten thouſand harmonious choriſters, priſoners at large, ſing ſweetly, as if inſenſible, or elſe regardleſs of their ſilken bondage. Eſpying thoſe I ſought after, and pretending to ſtart back, "My God! cried I, ah! Sir Michael, ah! "my Siſter, in that alcove ſits Lord Edwin "--look--behold--obſerve him—his arm "about the waiſt of Lady Bell---his hand "in her's. Am I wretched? Can I ſee "this with indifference?" and out I drew my handkerchief, applying it to my face

---not to hide my tears, but to ſtifle a laugh I could not eaſily ſuppreſs. Sir Michael was all on fire--"By heavens it is "too plain," exclaimed he. "Harriot, let "us ſnatch our ſiſter from her unworthy "Lord---from a villain who deſerves her "not. Fly from Lord Edwin, my dear O-"livia---we will protect you in Scotland." His Lady joined him with the warmeſt emotions of reſentment and tenderneſs. "Alas!" replied I, "think me not inſen-"ſible of your affection; but indeed I "cannot leave Lord Edwin---I mean ſo "precipitately leave him---perhaps now "you are come, matters may be accom-"modated---yet, believe me, Brother, I "do not always intend to lead the life I "now lead. Sir Harry Oſwall knows "nothing of my ſituation---if he did, "perhaps he would be rather gratified "than diſpleaſed." Sir Michael was going

to ſpeak in a tone not quite ſo calm as I have heard it on many occaſions, when behold we were ſuddenly interrupted: Lord and Lady Edwin, unperceived, had left the alcove, and by another walk came upon us, when we leaſt expected them. "My ſiſter, Madam," leading Harriot to Lady Edwin---"My Lord, this is Sir "Michael, this is Lady Leſley;" but alack! their affectionate welcomes were received with extreme, tho' not unaccountable coolneſs. "I fear," ſaid his Lordſhip ſmiling, whilſt he took almoſt forcibly the reluctant hand of Sir Michael, "I "fear, Madam," addreſſing himſelf to me, "I do not ſtand acquitted to your "excellent brother for the part I have "taken in diſtreſſing him." In vain I looked---in vain I trod on his foot---I ſaw he was determined to undo me; ſo, ſtriking precipitately into a ſide-walk,

"Well,

" Well, well, my Lord," ſaid I, turning my head as I went from them, " ſay what " you pleaſe, I put it out of my own power " to contradict your Lordſhip."---" Not " ſo, Olivia," ſaid Lady Edwin ſtepping after me, and getting hold of my gown; " *your* preſence is neceſſary to *our* vindica- " tion. Come hither, my Lord," as I ſtrug- gled to diſengage myſelf, both laughing immoderately, " my fair priſoner muſt be " forced to her trial." To her flew Lord Edwin, and both together hurried me back. Sir Michael looked----Harriot looked---let me die if I can tell you how they looked; ſomething it was between anger, wonder, and expectation. " Bleſs " me, good people," ſaid I, ſtill laugh- ing, " you take immenſe pains to flatter " my vanity---why oblige me to hear my " own great exploits recounted? Re- " member you cannot exalt my glory

"without humbling that of Sir Michael.
"Where is the high genius, who ſub-
"mits unmortified to ſee *outdone* his own
"wonderful *out doings?* You look ſur-
"priſed, Brother, but to ſhow you the
"moſt ingenuous perſon in the world is
"alſo the moſt juſt, bear teſtimony, that
"with a proper ſenſe of gratitude for the
"honour to which I have no ſort of title
"---thus, uniting the hands of Lord
"and Lady Edwin, I reſtore a worthy
"huſband to his faithful, lawful, wedded
"wife." I intended to have ſaid a deal more, but the ſecret was out---Harriot threw her arms about me---Sir Michael caught me in his, and with a tranſported action lifted me ſo far above the earth, that I began to doubt whether he would not carry me alive to heaven. "Olivia, my "generous Olivia," exclaims the one--- "Olivia, my generous Olivia," echoes the other:

other: In ſhort, exquiſite joy never aſſumed a form more like frantic madneſs. --Lord and Lady Edwin had their ſhare, Tommy and Billy were not excluded--- they ſaw their parents ecſtaſy, and began to friſk and caper about, without knowing, or wanting to know why. Lady Edwin, at my requeſt, explained matters and affairs ſo much to the advantage of her friend, that Sir Michael condeſcended to embrace his ſiſter, and ſuperior in artifice, proteſting ſhe was now more dear to him than ever; inſtead of his former coolneſs to Lord and Lady Edwin, he now courted their friendſhip, and was promiſed he ſhould enjoy it without reſerve. "Well, Olivia," ſaid this wicked brother of mine, "*our* debt is cancelled, but "you have ſtill a large one to pay--Sir "Harry Oſwall has advanced you ten "thouſand acts of tenderneſs, and as ma-

" ny proofs of fidelity---I do not aſk " you to ſatisfy all his demands imme- " diately---ſuffer me to deſpatch him on- " ly a promiſſory note of payment." Not waiting my reply, he went towards the houſe with ſuch expedition, as baffled my endeavours to overtake him---I followed however, and ſuſpecting he would refuſe me admittance to his cloſet, had the precaution to ſeal up a piece of blank paper in the form of a letter, and deſpatched it by a ſervant, planting myſelf as near the door as poſſibly I could. Every thing ſucceeded to my wiſh---the fellow tapped gently: " Who's there?" aſked Sir Michael; and being informed it was his ſervant with a letter, I heard him get up, walk towards the door, and take the key in his hand. " Give me the letter, " John," ſaid I, " and I will deliver it " to your maſter." John obeyed---the door

door opened, and in I ruſhed. "Here "is your letter, Sir," laughing and courteſying low---"the contents will give "you neither pain nor pleaſure. Per-"haps I prevent you from a matter of "more importance. You talked of a "promiſſory note, when you left us in "the garden."

"I hope my dear girl comes not to "obſtruct the happineſs of her Oſwall?"

"Softly and ſlow, Sir Michael—you "are in a mighty hurry to huddle up mat-"ters—your friend may not be ſo very "near the criſis of his good fortune, as "you imagine."

"How, Miſs Rutland!"

"Miſs Rutland! I perceive, Brother, "you are diſpleaſed—ſmile again, I en-"treat you---your frowns abſolutely fright "me---I believe it is from no other rea-"ſon than becauſe I am not uſed to them."

"Dear, capricious trifler!"

"Not very civil, I think. I intended "you a pretty compliment on the ſere- "nity of your countenance, and then to "ſtile me trifler---recall the inſignificant "appellation."

"How happens it, Olivia, that your "very foibles are becoming? Nothing "you ſay, nothing you do, can be call- "ed inſignificant?"

"Brother! Brother! you are a deep "deſigner---I hate your flattery—there's "danger in it."

"Trifle with me, trifle with Harriot, "trifle with the whole world, but ſpare "Sir Harry Oſwall."

"Poh! Sir Harry Oſwall! Why are "you for ever dunning my ears with Sir "Harry Ofwall? Why ſhould he, of all "the world, be excluded?"

"Certainly,

" Certainly, my dear, you one day or
" other will make him happy."

" I don't know that."

" Take care, or I ſhall be angry in
" earneſt."

" Nay, Brother, how do you mean I
" ſhould make him happy?"

" I know but one way of doing it—
" beſtow your hand where you have al-
" ready given your heart."

" Very conciſe, and very ſaucy, I could
" ſay; but ſuppoſe I do all this, am I con-
" vinced the man will be pleaſed with the
" gift; that it will make him happy?—
" Even admit it ſhould have this *ſtrange*
" effect, where is the great harm of tri-
" fling a *little*, *little* longer?"

" Well, but Olivia!"

" Well, but Sir Michael!---let me en-
" joy my humour ſix days from this day,
" and---"

" And

" And what after ſix days?"

" Why, that is rather too ſhort a ſpace."

" No more retractation, Siſter. What " after ſix days?"

" Lord, Brother! your eagerneſs ſcares " me---why---why---why after ſix days, I " will begin to conſider what I am to do " next."

" Piſh!" taking both my hands, *my* ſmiles reflecting on *his* countenance, " do you, or do you not love my friend?"

" Ridiculous! that now is the moſt " ſingular queſtion I was ever called up- " on to anſwer."

" Anſwer it you *muſt*, and anſwer it " ſincerely *too*, or I will try to hate " you."

" You may try, but I can tell you from " woeful experience, you will find it a " difficult matter to hate where you have " once loved."

" Enough,

" Enough, my ſweet Siſter! at laſt we
" underſtand each other---ſuffer me to
" finiſh my letter---ſuffer me to relieve
" the worthieſt heart in the world---let
" me ſurpriſe Sir Harry with a ſummons
" to Ferrar-Grove."

" Heyday! what have I ſaid to occa-
" ſion all this tranſport? Summon him if
" you pleaſe, but not in my name."

" Yes, in your name, Olivia."

" Come, I ſee, Brother, there is no
" keeping on tolerable terms, unleſs we
" enter upon ſeparate preliminaries. I,
" on the part of Olivia Rutland, do in-
" ſiſt that the ſaid Olivia ſhall reign ſix
" days ſole monarcheſs, to *command* with-
" out reſtriction, and to be *obeyed* with-
" out murmuring: This obedience ſhe
" not only exacts from you her moſt un-
" gracious ſubject, but from your allies

" alſo,

" alſo, Lord Edwin, Lady Edwin, and " Harriot Leſley."

" Granted. Now, Olivia, I expect " when you hear my demands, that you " repeat the ſame aſſent gracefully. I, " on the part of Sir Harry Oſwall, do " inſiſt, that, at the expiration of ſix days, " you reſign, for the ſame ſhort ſpace, " all authority into my hands, and into " the hands of my faithful allies; and " obey without murmuring. Further, I " guarantee, that you ſhall then be re- " ſtored to all your former power, con- " duct, command, and manage your love- " ing ſubjects, when, where, or how " you pleaſe. What ſay you, Olivia, " granted, or not granted?"

" Not granted, if I die for it."

" Then I write this inſtant to Sir Har- " ry Oſwall—by heaven I do."

" Stop

"Stop a moment—give me time to "recollect. If I ſhould reſign the reins, "will you promiſe mercy when your poor "handmaid ſues for it at the footſtool of "your throne?"

"As I do not intend treating you cru-"elly, you will have no reaſon to plead "for mercy. I promiſe to conſult your "felicity in whatever commands I give, "whatever obedience I exact."

You ſee, Mrs. Grafton, how I was beſet—I found myſelf entangled in his fair promiſes, and abſolutely ſaid, "Granted." Now are we the beſt friends in the world—no wrangling, no jangling, no diſputing. When I come to be ſettled in this kind of ſtill life, no dear contrivance going forward to keep one's ſpirits in motion—when I am in abſolute poſſeſſion of all this mechanical happineſs, it is my fear I ſhall appear mighty aukward, and

monſtrouſly ſilly. At preſent I was never more buſy. I have been writing inceſſantly—to whom? do you aſk—to Sir Harry Oſwall—begged, prayed, entreated his company; at length deſpairing that he would come during my reign, I did forge ſomething like a falſehood; the very firſt I have vended in my whole courſe of buſineſs: I ſent him word Sir Michael Leſley was dangerouſly ill; that he could not die in peace till he had ſeen him. And do you think I wrote all theſe epiſtles in my own hand? No; nor in my own name neither---I only gave out a rough draught, and ſaw that my ſecretaries tranſcribed them faithfully. The firſt was copied by Sir Michael, to which an anſwer was returned, with an abſolute rejection of our invitation---for a principality he would not ſee Lady Edwin! A ſecond begging, praying epiſtle appeared under

under the character of Lady Leſley; and a third of Lady Bell Haſtings, alias Lady Edwin, hinting ſhe had once ſeen him at Lord Longſdale's; and other hints out of which I hope to make ſomething: This lady acquaints him of Sir Michael's indiſpoſition, in conſequence of which he condeſcends to relent; but in a letter addreſſed to my ſiſter, entreats that he might ſee only his friend and her Ladyſhip—Lady Bell is excluded in the general exception; perhaps he thinks her heart enſlaved, and reſolves to ſet it at liberty by the aſſiſtance of that formidable conqueror called Abſence.

One trial more, to aſſure me of Sir Harry's conſtancy, and I ſubmit *gracefully*, as Sir Michael calls it, to obedience for the ſubſequent ſix days. Shocking that this ſhould be the laſt twelve hours in all that tedious time in which my power is unli-

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unlimited—I determine however to make the moſt of the dear, ſhort ſpan, and have given their cue already to my brother, my ſiſter, Lord and Lady Edwin.

Lady Edwin writes.

"And ſuch a cue!—upon my word, "Mrs. Grafton, this tormenting girl de- "ſerves—I dare not ſay what ſhe de- "ſerves, becauſe, forſooth, I am threat- "ened to have the pen taken from me, "if I preſume to rail againſt my ſove- "reign. She is abſolute, and as I bor- "rowed it for other purpoſes, to other "purpoſes it ſhall be dedicated.

"Lady Stenton, covered with wounds "and infamy, remains at Paris, her re- "putation blaſted, her life deſpaired of. "Wretched, criminal woman! My Lord "has a friend at that court, where her "Ladyſhip's diſgrace furniſhes an inva-

"riable

" riable ſubject of converſation. He gives
" the particulars of this horrible affair,
" without knowing in the leaſt they
" concern my Lord, to whom he
" writes. Whilſt Olivia is adding to
" thoſe ornaments nature has given her,
" the more ſuperfluous ones of dreſs, for
" the reception of Sir Harry Oſwall, I
" will tranſcribe that part of Monſieur
" Lanni's letter, which relates to the guil-
" ty, unfortunate Lady Stenton. After
" giving ſome account of his own ſitua-
" tion and concerns, he proceeds thus :"

' Paris is quite barren of momentous
' matter, or entertaining incident. Faith,
' my Lord, but for a country-woman of
' your own, I ſhould be at a loſs how to
' fill my uſual quantity of paper : Take
' then this ſtrange affair, juſt as I have re-
' ceived it from an intimate friend of the
' Marquis de Chameaux. Sorry I am that

'my tale ſhould reflect diſhonour on a na-
'tive of that kingdom which the noble
'Edwin's virtues has made me reve-
'rence. Your mind, my Lord, is above
'national prejudice, or I would drop a
'ſubject, the ſingular events of which
'flow from every tongue, and fill every
'breaſt with the two oppoſite extremes,
'of pity and abhorrence.

'About three weeks ſince there ap-
'peared at our court an Engliſh lady of
'quality, relict of Earl Stenton, and but
'newly married to a ſecond huſband.
'Her retinue was numerous, equipage
'ſplendid, hotel magnificent. She was
'ſoon viſited by people of the firſt diſ-
'tinction, and in a few days became the
'idol of Paris; not for beauty of perſon,
'but inſinuating ſweetneſs of manners.
'Amongſt the firſt to proclaim her La-
'dyſhip's merit, was the amiable Made-

'moiſelle Angelina Longeville, who poſ-
'ſeſſes all the purity, all the benevolence
'of an angel, in a form perfectly angelick.
'The Marquis de Chameaux loved,
'and was tenderly beloved by her; their
'paſſion had been of long ſtanding, and
'a diſtant day was fixed for the com-
'pletion of their wiſhes.

'The Marquis had a thouſand advan-
'tages, and though paſſionately attached
'to one object, his ſtock of gallantry was
'inexhauſtible; for whilſt his whole ſoul
'was devoted to Mademoiſelle Longe-
'ville, none of her ſex had reaſon to com-
'plain of neglect. Lady Stenton being
'honoured with the praiſes of his be-
'loved Angelina, conſequently became
'diſtinguiſhed by thoſe of the Mar-
'quis---her Ladyſhip ſoon received his
'devoirs with more than indifference,
'ſhe ſubſtituted all his unmeaning gal-

'lantry to what meaning ſhe pleaſed; ſhe 'formed him the moſt paſſionate of lo-'vers, and ſuppoſed him reſtrained only 'by reſpect, from declaring it plainly: 'Reſolved this bar ſhould no longer ob-'ſtruct her views, a letter calculated to 'remove diffidence from the moſt baſh-'ful, was deſpatched, which the Mar-'quis's tenderneſs for her reputation made 'him conceal even from his miſtreſs— 'deceived in her expectations, and that 'day near at hand which would give 'the object of her criminal paſſion to 'another, ſhe became mad with love, rage, 'and diſappointment; her woman was 'the only witneſs of her tumultuous ra-'vings; to all the world beſides ſhe was 'ſtill ſerene, ſtill affable; a more finiſh-'ed adept in diſſimulation did I never 'hear of.

'One day Mademoiſelle Longeville 'con-

'conſulting her on ſome affairs of dreſs,
'before the celebration of her nuptials
'with the Marquis, Lady Stenton re-
'commended ſo highly the genius of her
'woman, and inſiſted ſo preſſingly on
'Mademoiſelle's employing her, that
'the poor, unſuſpecting victim accepted
'the fatal favour. The creature was
'ſummoned by her lady, ordered to at-
'tend Mademoiſelle next morning, and
'was but too punctual. Gueſs the hor-
'rid cataſtrophe. In the evening when
'the Marquis came to viſit his miſtreſs,
'inſtead of meeting him with her uſual
'tranſporting ſmiles, he found her even
'inſenſible of his preſence. She lay on
'her bed ſurrounded with phyſicians,
'Lady Stenton kneeling, and ſupport-
'ing on her curſed boſom the fair, droop-
'ing flower; ſhedding over it tears of
'crocodile affliction. What a ſight this

'for the diſtracted lover! He retired, un-
'able to ſupport it.

'Lady Stenton's woman had given
'Mademoiſelle poiſon; yet ſhe was not
'ſo guilty as her vile employer—ſhe
'knew nothing of its being poiſon, her
'Lady had ſworn it was only a drug to
'make Angelina hate the Marquis, with-
'out whom ſhe muſt be miſerable. That
'afternoon ſhe came to viſit Mademoi-
'ſelle, and finding the work done, call-
'ed her agent aſide—I fear, ſaid ſhe,
'with well counterfeited horror, a fatal
'miſtake has happened—I have miſſed
'a vial of poiſon from my cabinet, and
'the drops I intended for Mademoiſelle
'are ſtill remaining; ſhe told her further,
'now it was paſt, and could not be re-
'called. To avoid the puniſhment of their
'unintentional crime, they muſt obſerve

'the

'the profoundeſt ſecrecy, deſcribing the
'terrible tortures that would be inflicted
'on them if diſcovered. She diſmiſſed
'the trembling, affrighted wretch, be-
'lieving her ſecured againſt either temp-
'tation or remorſe. Mademoiſelle Lon-
'geville being ſoon after deprived of rea-
'ſon, her Ladyſhip's affliction and aſſi-
'duity muſt have evaded all ſuſpicion,
'even if the blackneſs of her ſoul had not
'been quite ſo carefully concealed. It
'was not ſo with the wretched inſtru-
'ment of her cruelty, having neither
'love, revenge, or jealouſy to ſatiate,
'ſhe could not ſupport a ſight of ſo
'much horror. She ran from the room
'of Madame Longeville, threw herſelf
'on a ſopha in the anti-chamber, wrung
'her hands, cried out, *What have I done!*
'and fainted. A ſervant who heard theſe
words, without aſſiſting her recovery,

'conveyed them inſtantly to the Marquis
'---dead or alive he ordered ſhe ſhould be
'brought to him that moment, and, in
'the preſence of three domeſticks, he
'extorted from her a full confeſſion.
'Pierced to the ſoul, reaſon deſerted her
'throne, and the firſt victim of his diſ-
'traction was the wretch who had occa-
'ſioned it; drawing his ſword from her
'body reeking with blood, he made his
'way through the affrighted ſervants, flew
'to the apartment of his miſtreſs, and
'plunged it repeatedly in the boſom of
'Lady Stenton; then falling on her bo-
'dy, embraced it paſſionately, calling her
'his dear, dear Angelina! and, without
'the leaſt degree of ſenſibility, was con-
'veyed to his chamber. It is ſuppoſed
'the wounds of Lady Stenton will be fa-
'tal---her woman's are doubtful---nor is
'the fate of the amiable Longeville yet

'deter-

'determined. Our gracious and compaſ-
'ſionate monarch, hearing of the melan-
'choly cataſtrophe, ſent his own phyſi-
'cians to her aid---they have been ſo far
'ſucceſsful, that there is a probability
'of her reſtoration to health. Theſe flat-
'tering hopes give univerſal ſatisfaction,
'&c. &c.'

"I have not time for another word.
"Sir Harry Oſwall is this moment ar-
"rived! Adieu, adieu."

LETTER

LETTER XXXV.

OLIVIA to Mrs. GRAFTON.

HUSH! not a word, Lady Edwin! I charge you, on your obedience, not one word to interrupt the aweful ſilence.

In what ſacred temple, what hallowed cell, what melancholy vault, do you ſuppoſe me? I write not from a temple, a cell, or a vault—I write from a pretty, chearful cloſet, joining the apartment in which Sir Michael and my ſiſter are waiting to receive Sir Harry Oſwall; ſo cloſely joined, that I can hear and ſee all that paſſes. Underſtand you now my huſh-word to Lady Edwin? A glaſs door and thin ſilk curtain is all that in a moment

will

will divide me from—Heaven and earth! that moment is arrived—one peep, be the conſequence what it will---how the fool flutters---Lady Edwin! your ſalts, Lady Edwin. No! no! don't rummage for them---I am quite well---my hand trembles a little, that's all---take the pen ---I'll ſtand at the door and tell you exactly how he looks, and what he ſays. Remember you are only my ſecretary, be expeditious---write every word with exactneſs. Duce take my odious prolixity; whilſt inſtructing your Ladyſhip, I have loſt the ſweeteſt meeting in the world--- Sir Harry has ſaluted Harriot, my brother has embraced him, and all three are ſeated. Did I ſay I would tell you how he looked? The glaſs is bad, the curtain thick, or my ſight impaired---I can ſcarce diſtinguiſh objects, much more looks--- I rub my eyes with my handkerchief---

they

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they

they are better---I can now ſee clearly. Sir Harry's countenance is full of ſurpriſe---natural enough. Does he not meet the man, whom he ſuppoſed at the point of death, in perfect health? I fancy there has been but little ſaid of either ſide. Huſh! Now, now, Lady Edwin, write away---oh! the muſick of that voice---give us a dialogue, quickly, quickly!

Sir *Harry*. For what end have you betrayed me hither, Sir Michael? Am I to ſacrifice my laſt, my only ſatisfaction, for the ſatisfaction of thinking, of acting honourably?

Olivia. Noble, generous, virtuous apprehenſion!

Sir *Michael* (riſing.) By heaven, the honour of my Oſwall is dear to Leſley as his own.

Sir *Harry* (riſing.) If you are ſincere,

ſuffer me to go without ſeeing Lady Edwin.

Sir *Michael.* Aſk any other proof of my ſincerity---you muſt ſee Lady Edwin, and from her hand receive your happineſs.

Olivia. Take care, Brother, you do not go too far.

Lady *Leſley* (taking his hand.) Indeed, Sir Harry, moſt valuable friend of my beloved, you ſhall ſee Lady Edwin, you ſhall ſee her without danger.

Olivia. Take care, ſiſter! How gracefully he raiſes her hand to his lips!

Sir *Harry.* Pardon me, Madam, with the utmoſt pain I reſiſt your Ladyſhip's commands----without danger I cannot behold Lady Edwin---the interview deſtroys me.

Olivia. Mark, Madam, how very formidable you appear to my hero.

Sir *Harry*. To ſee her without danger, I muſt forget ten thouſand graces which I have fondly doated on.

Olivia. Lady Edwin, can you write all this without bluſhing?

Sir *Michael*. Harry, I will no longer exclude your brighter proſpects.

Olivia. Brother, if you dare! Lord bleſs me! how I tremble.

Sir *Harry*. I never can behold them---my ſoul's ſight is weakened by affliction.

Olivia. Ah! Lady Edwin, put me down one tear for that ſweet expreſſion.

Lady *Leſley*. Sir Michael ſhall reſtore your ſoul's ſight to all its ſtrength. My dear Love, do not keep this beſt of men longer in ſuſpenſe.

Olivia. What! before he has ſtood his tryal fairly? If you do put him out of ſuſpence till that is over---you are both traitors.

Sir

Sir *Michael.* Lady Edwin has a fair friend.

Olivia. Charming ſound! my faithful ſubjects!

Sir *Harry.* She has many friends---ſhe deſerves many. But why this one particularly ſingled from the reſt?

Sir *Michael.* To make you, to make us *all* happy.

Sir *Harry.* Make *me* happy?

Sir *Michael.* Hear my propoſal, then refuſe it if you can. Lady Edwin's friend muſt be the wife of Oſwall—ſhe is young, rich, and amiable—you ſuſpect not that ſhe loves you, yet you are her firſt love, ſhe will never love another.

Lady *Leſley.* Say you will be happy—ſay you will accept the hand of Lady Edwin's friend---ſay you will love that friend as you once loved our Olivia.

Olivia. Ah! Lady Edwin, Sir Harry's face

face is overſpread with crimſon---he is embarraſſed---his fine expreſſive eyes are riveted on the ground---he heſitates, and I am loſt---he lifts them ſlowly up---my God! there is reſentment in them---they are averted from Harriot---they flaſh indignation on Sir Michael---again I revive.

Sir *Harry*. I heſitate, Sir Michael, not from irreſolute waverings, my ſoul is ſteady to her purpoſe. I heſitate from the ſtrongeſt emotions of aſtoniſhment---from doubts of your friendſhip. If I injure you, forget, but do not think me ungrateful. Lady Leſley, allow me the honour to kiſs your hands. Farewell, Sir; farewell, Madam.

Olivia. He is actually going---my brother and ſiſter ſtop him---my triumph is complete.

Lady

Lady *Edwin.* Now, my dear Olivia, is the critical moment---*you cannot go yet*--- but I ſay you can, you ſhall, you muſt go---not the ſixtieth part of a minute, though you kneel for it. I throw down my pen to attend you.

LETTER XXXVI.

OLIVIA to Mrs. GRAFTON.

AH! my dear Jane, where am I? who am I? what am I? Not where I have been, not whom I have been, not what I have been---I am no longer at Ferrar-Grove; I am no longer Olivia Rutland; I am no longer abſolute. Imagine not you are to be cheated of my interview with Sir Harry Oſwall. No! I would as ſoon rob my face of thoſe graces which he pretends to ſee there, as I would rob my heart of the ecſtatic pleaſure it will take in the ſweet repetition.

"You *can*, and you *ſhall*, and you "*muſt* go," ſaid Lady Edwin," and ſnatching my hand before I had time, perhaps incli-

inclination, to reſiſt, dragged me from the cloſet.

Like the meteor that flaſhes on the face of heaven, did I in all my glory flaſh upon Sir Harry Oſwall. My brother retained one of his reluctant hands, Harriot the other; immediately as I entered, both quitted their hold, and ſeizing on their poor, bluſhing, faultering, breathleſs victim, flew with her to that part of the room, where ſtood the pride of his ſex, exclaiming as they hurried her along, "*This* is the wife you have *refuſed*—*This* "is the *friend* of Lady Edwin—Lady "Edwin preſents her to you—from her "hand, from our hand take your Olivia."

Now tell me, Mrs. Grafton, what had I to expect? That he would fall down and worſhip his divinity at leaſt—he did fall, but not at my feet. Great grief and

great joy have the ſame effect on minds very ſuſceptible. Sir Harry had felt the former, and was unprepared for the ſudden reception of the latter. Paleneſs ſpread his face---his eyes were dreadfully fixed on mine, he did not faint; no! that would have been womanly; but retiring, or rather rambling back a few paces, he fell againſt the hangings, with ſuch a ſpectre-like appearance, that never did I feel any ſhock equal to what I then felt. Olivia, ſaid my brother, you have carried this jeſt too far. I burſt into tears, and whilſt Sir Michael, Harriot, and Lady Edwin, were leading him to the air, pretending to aſſiſt them, I ſlid his icy hand to my lips, whiſpering over it, "Oh, my amiable Oſwall! live, live "to forgive your wretched Olivia."

As ſoon as he began to recover, I ſlid

away to my dreſſing-room, half aſhamed of my weakneſs, though conſcious he had not heard the tender ejaculation.

In my way I met Lord Edwin, he ſtopped me, and wanted to be informed of a great deal; but I deſpatched him for intelligence to thoſe I left below.

Near a quarter of an hour did I paſs alone, deeply meditating---all my little tricks and ſtratagems to diſtreſs Sir Harry were impartially canvaſſed, and I ſtood ſelf-reproved.

In the midſt of my cogitations, the door of my peaceful aſylum was diſturbed by three gentle taps---I had no idea who was approaching---or if ſuch an idea had intruded, what then? Why *really* and *ſincerely* I ſhould have done as I did *then*---I ſhould have ſaid, *Come in*, and roſe with a ſmiling countenance to receive my viſitor. The moſt graceful,

the moſt paſſionate, the moſt amiable of men did not greet his Olivia on the knee, or abuſe her ear with the fawning language of adulation; Sir Harry Oſwall entered with the dignity of a ſovereign, not with the abject meanneſs of a ſlave; a graceful, eaſy, natural dignity---he addreſſed me, not as a being ſuperior to himſelf, but as a woman whom he loved more than himſelf---he did not twiſt, and ſcrew his features, as if at every word he was going to cry for joy, at his wonderful portion of happineſs; but they beamed with love, pleaſure, gratitude, and benevolence.

I never felt my own mind ſo diminutive; if I have any good qualities, they are mere humble ſhrubs, which my eye diſdains to trace, whilſt the noble, towering virtues of Sir Harry Oſwall are in view.

This

This day, the next day, and the following day, was all tranſport, content, and friendſhip at Ferrar-Grove; the fourth day, a change of miniſtry was hinted; the fifth it was affirmed I was no longer to preſide at the helm; and the ſixth I found myſelf abſolutely obliged to reſign.

Though I had promiſed obedience to Sir Michael; though my heart jumped, friſked, and capered, begging, praying, and entreating that I would unite it with my hand; I ſhould not have reſigned my liberty quite ſo early, but from a motive more weighty, than either the commands of my commanders, or the feelings of my own heart; it was the moſt impatient ardor to throw myſelf at the feet of Lady Oſwall. Oh, my friend! ſuch a letter in the days of my levity did Sir Michael receive, as I ſhall weep over a thouſand hours to come---my tears ſhall

quench the bluſhes which ſelf-reproach will be ever heaping on my cheek---I hate myſelf for giving a moment's pain to this moſt excellent of women. She receives me with tranſport inſtead of upbraidings---with thanks and bleſſings, inſtead of anger and reproaches--ſhe preſſes me to her maternal boſom, and tells me her heart ſhall know no diſtinction between her Oſwall and his Olivia.

Now let me account for my ſudden tranſition from Ferrar-Grove to North-hill. Sir Harry had not been a viſitor at the former of theſe happy manſions more than two days, when the good folks to whom I had bound myſelf in ſubjection, afraid perhaps I ſhould play them another trick, began to be very importunate; and the laſt day of Sir Michael's reign, was named for the day of days—named by them, though not aſſented to by me.

In

In the mean time came a packet from Scotland; Lady Leſley opened it in full council, and gave a letter into my hand, the ſeal of which was broke, accompanied with theſe words: "This, Olivia, "I left behind me, when we ſet out ſo "haſtily, to give you a meeting in Eng-"land. Had you been really married "to Lord Edwin, and not quite happy "(you remember your pretty contrived "jealouſy) the ſight of it might have "added to your unhappineſs; but now "you have a title to its inſpection. Re-"tire, my dear, read it in your cloſet--- "the contents will affect you."

I followed her advice---ſhe ſaid I ſhould be affected---I was affected---my ſtreaming eyes witneſſed how ſeverely. This letter, written by Lady Oſwall to my brother, was the ſame I have already men-

mentioned. How noble! how pathetic her ſtile! how tender her expreſſions!

Sir Harry ſurpriſed me on my knees, calling down the bleſſings of heaven on his revered parent---for myſelf, that power might be given me to convince her of my duty, my gratitude, my affection.

Sir Harry tenderly lifted me from my ſupplicating poſture. I gave him Lady Oſwall's letter; he read it, and we mingled our tears together. I no longer heſitated to comply with the ardent ſolicitations of my lover, and injunctions of my ſuperiors.

Well, what have I more to tell my dear Mrs. Grafton? That we ſet off next morning from the chapel-door---that my brother and ſiſter accompanied us---that Lord and Lady Edwin are to join us in the autumn---that we reached

North-

North-hill four days after we left Ferrar-Grove---that I doat on Lady Oſwall ---that I embrace Mr. Grafton---and that I love you ſincerely.

FINIS.

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